

Interview with Jack K. McFall

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR JACK K. MCFALL

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Initial interview date: May 9, 1988

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Q: Ambassador McFall, I'm very happy to have you here today. I know you've been interviewed a number of times for other projects, but we would like to get a particular sequence on your Foreign Service career. Then at the end of it, I would like to discuss with you, perhaps, certain ideas that you may have on how things could be done better in the future or how they were done in the past.

I wonder if you would start out by a general description, anything you want to say either from birth or education, wherever you want to start, about how you got interested in foreign affairs and a little bit about how you got into the Foreign Service and State Department. Then if you want to go right ahead and start talking about the various positions you held in the Foreign Service, you can do that, or I will ask you some more questions. Just start out and say anything you feel like saying.

MCFALL: I suppose the best way to start is to start at the beginning. That particular phase of my life I don't recall as having been covered in either of the previous oral history interviews.

I have difficulty in remembering at time when I didn't want to go into the Foreign Service. My mother told me that she recalled that when I was eight years old in the backyard

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playing with the neighborhood boys, we were discussing what we wanted to be such as steam shovel operators, streetcar conductors or the like. She couldn't remember any time that I didn't say I was going to be a diplomat. I must say her memory ran a little bit further back than mine, but, in essence, it is true because my whole career was shaped by the determination I had formed to go into the Foreign Service. But, for sure, I didn't know quite how to go about it.

At that time, we were living in Denver, Colorado. I was an only child. I had no idea what kind of educational preparation I should have. As time went by, we moved to Indiana. My father was always a quite successful lawyer and businessman, but he had, in his late years, both health and business reverses. So I was left as an only progeny with the responsibilities of the family on my hands. I was determined, however, not to forsake my educational objective so I determined the place I wanted to go for my educational preparation was Georgetown University Foreign Service School where school was conducted six nights a week, three hours each night. The school was then located in downtown Washington.

Now with my family's financial situation improving, at age nineteen, I left my position in Indiana as a teller in a bank and took off for Washington, D.C. That was in 1925. I remember my money pile was only \$200. That was it. Out of that sum, I had to pay for my tuition and books and start school, so I knew I had to get some work right away if I was to survive. This caused a considerable problem because I couldn't find any work. I finally took on a task of peddling saving clocks from door to door on behalf of a Washington bank. My income was very meager. I wasn't making enough for me to eat regularly, and it just so happened then that I had reached the point where I couldn't pay my boarding house room rent. So I went down to the Salvation Army. At that time, it was located down on lower Pennsylvania Avenue. They very graciously admitted me, and I guess that this act was, indeed, one of salvation and the turning point in my then unhappy plight. I awakened there on a Sunday morning having slept on a bunk there. After getting up this particular Sunday morning, I was casually thumbing over the newspapers on a table, and my eye

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was captured by a photograph. The caption said, "New senator appointed from Indiana." He had been appointed by the governor to fill the unexpired term of a senator who had just died. So I thought, "Well, I've tried every other approach. Maybe I don't know anything about this, but I'll go up and see what I can do."

So I went up to the Hill. The senator hadn't come to Washington yet, but he'd just appointed his secretary. The secretary told me, "I would like to see you in this job. I think it would be very good for you, and you could work during the day and go to Georgetown at night." As I said before, it was then exclusively a night school.

Now a word about how politics works. I wrote a letter to the president of the bank in Indiana where I had been a teller, and I told him that I had reached this far, that the senator was coming to Washington, and he wanted to have letters recommending me from both the Republican County Chairman and the Republican District Chairman as well as several of the leading Republicans in the city and county. Well, it happened that my mother and my father were both dedicated Democrats, so I was confronted with a terrific problem right off the bat. So knowing that I couldn't achieve any help from either of my parents, I wrote to the president of the bank for whom I had previously worked. And you know what he did? He was a leader in the community, and he solicited and secured twenty-six letters in my behalf. I knew only two of those individuals. One of the unknowns wrote and said, "This fellow McFall is the most qualified person you'll ever find for a job in your office. You don't want to let him get away."

At this point, I was visiting a girlfriend in Pennsylvania. She had sent me the money to come up there, and I had left her phone number with the senator's office. The phone rang in her home, and a voice said, "This is Senator Arthur Robinson of Indiana. I want to speak to Mr. McFall. I'm told he is visiting you. It's very important. I want him to come right down to Washington and go to work in my office as soon as possible." He sounded as if he were fearful he might lose my services! (Laughs) So that's the way I got started in Washington.

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Later on, I transferred from the senator's office over to the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, after having worked for Robinson for three years. Fortuitously, my congressman from Indiana had become the ranking minority member of the House Appropriations Committee, so I went to work there as an apprentice. As I recall, there was a staff of some twelve on the committee at that time in 1928. I am told they now have something in the neighborhood of 150 employees. I worked there on the staff of the Appropriations Committee as an apprentice, becoming educated in the organization of government, learning the ropes of the departments and the independence agencies of government and how they functioned.

During the intervening years between my employment by the senator and my employment by the House Appropriations Committee, I attended seven years of night school graduating from Georgetown Foreign Service School with a BFS degree (Bachelor of Foreign Service) followed by graduation from George Washington Law School with a Bachelor of Law degree. I was president of my senior class at each of these institutions. I took and passed the bar examination on the first try and was admitted to practice before the various District of Columbia courts and also before the U.S. Supreme Court, the motion to admit me to practice before that court having been made by the then Attorney General of the United States, Homer Cummings.

Also during this period, the chairman of the committee assigned me, from time to time, to accompany traveling congressional groups. My baptismal trip in this area of operations was a memorable one and one that had no little impact on one segment of the future conduct of our foreign relations. It was also one in which I unwittingly played a key facilitating role before I joined the Foreign Service. I was working in my role as executive secretary of the subcommittee handling appropriations for the State Department. Nelson Rockefeller at this time was working in the State Department, and Cordell Hull was Secretary of State. While my memory of the exact amount of money involved in the issue I will relate is cloudy (I think it was something of the order of \$90,000), the money

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was requested to establish a new approach to our relations with our Latin American neighbors wherein we, the United States, would send selected Federal government employees to some few selected countries where they would render technical assistance to those countries. Under the plan, as I recall, the U.S. would pay the salaries of such individuals and the country to which they were assigned would pay their maintenance expenses while they were stationed abroad. Secretary Hull had made a spirited plea for the subcommittee to give him the funds to start the program, but when the committee hearings were completed, and the committee reached the point of deciding on the disposition to be made of the \$90,000, the vote of the five subcommittee members showed only one - the chairman - in favor of providing the requested funds. The other four committee members had opposed any funds being provided to institute any such type program.

At this point, the subcommittee chairman, Congressman McMillian of South Carolina pulled me into the picture. He told me he was simply too embarrassed by what had happened on the four to one vote against the project in his subcommittee to tell Hull about the committee action, but he realized that Hull must be told by someone before the committee action that had been taken reached the public. Hence, he asked me to make an appointment with Hull and convey the bad news to him. This I did, albeit reluctantly, and Hull's reaction was set forth in unpublishable terms. He yelled at me, "But this irresponsible action just can't be! What can we do to change it?"

I really had no satisfactory answer to his question, so knowing, as I did, the intensity of the opposition of the four subcommittee members to sanction any appropriation for the project, I merely said (with the idea of conveying the absence of any viable way to change the votes), "Mr. Secretary, the only way I could envision you ever accomplishing a change in their attitudes would be for this group to visit Latin America and see, firsthand, just what your proposal contemplates."

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Hull looked hard and quizzically at me and said, "Do you mean for a congressional committee to leave the United States and undertake an investigation abroad?"

I recall thinking, "Egad, what have I said, and what right do I have to suggest such a thing?"

But Hull replied, "If that is what it takes, that's what ought to be done."

I remember returning to the Capitol after that session with Hull wondering what kind of a cat I had let out of what kind of a bag. When I reported to my boss, the subcommittee chairman, and related the conversation with Hull. I remember him saying, "Well, for sure Hull will drop that idea. He should be smart enough to know that a congressman wouldn't dare embark on any such a project taking him abroad. A congressman's constituents would ride him out of his Congressional district on a rail!"

The only foreign travel I had ever heard about up to that time by members of Congress was the annual meeting of the Interparliamentary Union, and to which we sent a handful of congressional delegates to its meeting. I, in fact, had acted, in the past, as secretary to our delegation to two of those meetings; one in Oslo, and one in Budapest.

But did Hull ever take the ball and run with it! He called a press conference at once, informed all the press that he was asking the subcommittee on State Department appropriations to go to Latin America at his personal behest to look into ways in which we might aid Latin and Central America in the many fields of technical assistance. This approach by Hull understandably put a whole new face on the idea and made it possible for the group of five members to take off on a trip in uncharted seas.

We worked and investigated religiously. In as much as this trip was indeed such a new and novel approach, it attracted tremendous press interest and headline newspaper coverage and pictures in all the nineteen countries visited. It was the most hectic event I ever tackled! I lost eighteen pounds in the sixty days we were gone, attributable probably

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to the fact that caviar and champagne don't seem to stick to one's bones! We were given receptions or dinners or both by each of the presidents of the nineteen countries, and I carried home a cigar with the presidential seal on the band given me by the head of state of each country we visited.

From Cordell Hull's standpoint, the trip was a resounding success. On return, the subcommittee vote was changed to a four to one affirmation vote to provide the funds requested by Hull. From this beginning, President Truman's Point Four program evolved and came into being.

But what a Pandora's box of future congressional foreign travel, most of which in my view was and is not deserving, was unwittingly thus opened!

Then my time came, after about four or five years as a staff member, I was named as one of the Executive Secretaries of the committee to be in charge of one of the subcommittees. They assigned to me the subcommittee on the Departments of State, Justice, Commerce, Labor, and the Federal Judiciary. So I had those five Federal agencies under my staff jurisdiction. I continued in that role right on through the ensuing years until I was called into the U.S. Navy right after Pearl Harbor.

I had visited Germany on my honeymoon in 1933, and I visited again in 1936, and I observed that Hitler was definitely galvanizing his control. It had reached a point where I became convinced that we were going to be in a war within five years. So when I came back to Washington, I remember that a few days after I returned, I went down to the Washington Navy Yard, asked to see the admiral in charge. His name was Petengil, as I recall. I hadn't met him before my call. So his secretary took me in, and I said to the admiral, "I just wanted to come in and ask you what I have to do to prepare for joining the Naval Reserve because I am convinced we're going to be in a war within five years."

He looked at me as if he was questioning my sanity. This was in the days when no one had any thought of a war, you know. The admiral said, "I have had scarcely anybody apply

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to go in the Naval Reserve for the last two years!" Well, that's just the way my Navy career started. So, in any event, I was appointed a junior grade lieutenant, and I started in on my studies for the Naval Intelligence Reserves, and I prepared for it in a dedicated way by taking the preparatory courses offered.

The war came just a few months after my five year prediction. I was called in, and I was in the war for well upward of four years.

I had a very interesting assignment development. As I told you, I was commissioned in the Naval Intelligence Service, and they put me into Navy censorship, which is about the deadliest thing that could ever happen to one expecting action. I'd been in censorship for about three months after Pearl Harbor, when, out of the blue, there was a call from a Navy Department commander to say they wanted me to come over to the main Navy building right away to this commander's office. When I reported to him, he said, in matter-of-fact fashion, "You're going to appear in half an hour before the War Plans Board of the Navy. Admiral King is presiding."

I can remember I thought, "Why in the world would they be calling on me to go before this august War Plans Board?" The commander then escorted me to the meeting room of the War Plans Board, and they threw this big door open. It was a shock that will remain in memory. All I could see was the color gold. Every man at that table was an admiral—every man! And there must have been about fourteen of them. Admiral King was sitting at the far end of this long table, and his aide was behind him with a map of the world on it. I was standing there at the opposite end of this long table, trembling like an aspen leaf. At this point, Admiral King spoke up, "Now, you have come here so we may explain to you where you're going to be assigned. We're sending you with emergency orders to Sierra Leone. I want you to understand the reason for our action."

So then the admiral's aide pointed to Sierra Leone, a country on the west coast of Africa and one about which I knew practically nothing. The aide said, "You're going to be sent

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here,” pointing on the map. Now this discussion was taking place during a very bad stage of the war. This was when General Rommel had advanced to within sixty miles of Alexandria, Egypt. The situation looked very bleak for us. He said, “We’re very much perturbed. As the War Plans Board, we have decided that we would probably start our counter-offense in Sierra Leone if certain eventualities come into being, and the Allies should lose Gibraltar, lose the Mediterranean, and lose Dakar, Senegal, then we would likely start our counter-offensive from Sierra Leone.” He then said, “We are going to send you over there to get prepared for this development. We’re going to send you over 600 Seabees. You’ll be the American senior officer present in the country.”

So they sent me over to this God-awful desolated place a few degrees off the equator that was known as “the white man’s grave,” and soon these battalions of Seabees arrived. It was a nightmare. We had to put them up in old World War I dilapidated barracks. There were 10,000 British Army, Navy, and Air Force stationed there, and it has one of the largest harbors in the world. Five-hundred ships could be accommodated at anchorage. Hence, it was fittingly used as a convoy grouping point. But there was no recreation for our Seabees that arrived. Everything that you could imagine happened at one time or another. As I recall, we had eighty-seven Seabees in the brig at one time. We had murders and rapes and everything deplorable you could think of. There were no outlets of any kind for them. There were only forty white women in that British colony, and thirty-five of those were British nurses. There were no American women.

In any event, the war was later finished. I had malaria three times. After an absence of two years, I was brought back to Washington, and I was then appointed first Assistant Naval Attach# at our embassy in Canada and later became Acting Naval Attach# for an extended period before being discharged at the end of the war. I then returned to my pre-war position with the House Appropriations Committee having been in the Navy for four years. The Appropriations Committee chairman decided that I should take over staff responsibility for the Navy Appropriations Bill in that year of frantic demobilization.

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At this time, James Forrestal was the Secretary of the Navy. The subcommittee went through protracted committee hearings on the Navy Appropriations Bill and proceeded to make drastic cuts in future funds for the Navy. The subcommittee ruthlessly cut the Navy budget estimates - just decimated the bill. This wholesale slashing of funds so embarrassed the subcommittee chairman that he said to me, "I want you to phone Forrestal and ask him to come up to our committee room so you can explain to him what we've done, item by item, on the bill. I simply haven't the heart to do it. I want him to know before tomorrow when our action becomes public knowledge."

So I did as ordered, and Forrestal came right up to the Capitol with Admiral Forrest Sherman, who was his chief of staff. I sat at that green felt committee table with the two of them on one side, and I on the other. I was the only one there facing the two of them. I went through the allowance book item by item, and as I did, I watched Forrestal. He kept getting paler and paler every time I'd turn a page and announce the committee decision. At the end, I said, "That's it, gentlemen. That's all." I must have been about twenty minutes, I guess, going through the action, item by item, that the committee had taken.

At this point, Forrestal threw his face into his hands, put his head down on the table and cried like a baby. I've always believed that that dramatic episode was the inception of his suicidal problem. It all just developed at once.

Now we get to the connection that this might have had with the Foreign Service, and this was a very interesting one. I'd been back from the war about three or four months working for the Appropriations Committee, when there was a rap on my committee room door in the Capitol building. I went to the door, and there were standing two people, one Congressman Clarence Cannon, who was chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and the other Congressman was John Taber, who was the senior ranking minority member of the committee. They were there together, standing at the door. I can remember thinking, "Well, dear God, this must be the end. I've been fired." And this reaction on my part was because any time that pair of congressmen got together, it had to do with something

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involving the committee staff or something of transcendent importance that they had to get together on. This was because they hated each other. They had had two fist fights, and it was not a happy situation. So you can imagine my thoughts in seeing these two gentlemen standing there at the door.

They said, "We want to talk to you about something."

I said, "Gentlemen, be my guests." I brought them in to the committee table; they sat on one side, I sat opposite them.

Chairman Cannon spoke up and said, "We have something to tell you. I don't know whether you know it or not, but we've only had four chiefs of staff on the Appropriations Committee since the Civil War."

I said, "No, I didn't realize there had been so few."

"Yes, that's all, only four since the war. But there's a change coming up now. So Congressman Taber and I have been discussing this matter, and we have decided that we want you to take over the top job as chief of staff on the committee."

I was speechless. There was nothing beforehand - no intimation of anything like this happening. At this time, I was right in the middle of the twelve staff members in terms of seniority on the staff payroll. Hence, the proposal was such a total shock. I would have never expected any offer like this even had I known about such a vacancy coming into being. My reply startled them both. I said, "Gentlemen, this is something I simply can't give you a snap judgment to do anything about. I'm sure you both will agree that because I owe it to my wife to tell her about this before I just blithely say that I'm delighted and will accept."

"What do you mean, talk to your wife?" the chairman replied. "You don't need to talk to your wife on a matter like this. You know, this will be a lifetime appointment for you, it pays

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the same salary as a congressman, and it's non-political. It's one of the most powerful jobs in the United States!" And he added, "In this job, you are beholden to no one, assuming your good behavior, but many will be beholden to you. I'd rather have this job than any Cabinet post I know of. I'll tell you that right now."

So I sat there, listening to all this, and then I told them, "Gentlemen, please understand and give me time to talk to my wife about this tonight."

The conversation ended with the chairman saying, "All right, if you think you must. Just tell her tonight, and then come up to my office and sign the required papers tomorrow morning. Remember, your pay will be \$12,000 a year - same as a member of Congress, and the Appropriations Committee is unique in giving you lifetime job security."

After this meeting with the two of them, they left, and I just slunk down in my chair. I thought, "I can't imagine this happening to me. It's just unbelievable."

It was exactly one-half hour from the time the two of them left, and I was still sitting there at the same table contemplating, thinking, trying to rationalize what had happened when the phone rang. I answered the phone, and the person calling said, "Hello, Jack. This is Selden Chapin, the Director General of the Foreign Service." He said, "You know, we've all known about your interest in the Foreign Service for all these many years and your disappointment in not being able to go in." I had finished Georgetown Foreign Service School just when entrance into the Foreign Service dried up, and no new Foreign Service officers were taken in for several years thereafter. He was right, I was deeply disappointed.

Q: I had the same experience.

MCFALL: So you're familiar with it. Chapin then said, "Now, you're the first person we've called. We want you to apply because we know this is something you've wanted to do all your life."

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So I said, "Oh, Selden, you don't know what happened to me a half an hour ago!" And I told him about the offer that had just been made to me by the two congressmen who had left my office just minutes before his telephone call.

"Well," Chapin replied, "you do, indeed, have a problem now. This is a turning point in your life, for sure. You have to make up your mind quickly what you want to do."

Then I came home and told my wife, Martha, and she said, "It's your decision. Whatever you do, I'm with you."

So I went back to the committee the next morning, and I told Chairman Cannon, "I have to have one more day to think about this." I explained to him what had happened with the call from Chapin right after they left the committee room.

Cannon said, "I can't imagine you would be irrational enough to go into the Foreign Service at this stage in your life. You have this opportunity here in front of you that's good for your lifetime. An enviable job with fine retirement - a marvelous job." He added, "The salary of the chief of staff of the committee always keeps pace with the salaries paid the members of Congress, so there it is."

Then a further fact was to be considered. I found out from Chapin at what salary I could enter the Foreign Service, and he said, "The best you could expect would be a Class III officer salary." The committee chief of staff's pay at that time was \$12,000, and, as I remember, the Class III officer pay was \$8,500 or something of that order. So it became established that I would be giving up what was, in those days, a lot of money if I decided on the Foreign Service route.

Well, in any case, I made the decision to go for the Foreign Service, and I told Messrs Cannon and Taber that I had made the decision. I told them that I realized I might not even

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pass the examination. I might not qualify on the oral board examination, but nonetheless I was going to assume the hazard because it's what I had wanted to do all my life.

Then I went in and took the exam, and, as I recall, I was one of the first persons to be appointed under the Manpower Law provisions. So now you have the background of how I got into the Foreign Service. Now I have talked too damn long about it, I know. But I have given you the background.

Now, do you have any particular thoughts on where you want me to go now?

Q: I think if you would just pick up from there and give us a chronological event of your various posts. Perhaps mention the major interests of each job you had, and we can get into detail later. Just to get a broad-brush look at your career would be great.

MCFALL: There's one thought I might mention. After I passed the examination and came into the Service, I was appointed as a special assistant to Selden Chapin, the Director General of the Foreign Service. Chapin called me into his office and said, "The first thing I want you to do is to work out a system to get news out to the field about what happens in Washington that is of concern to the field service. I want a newsletter of some kind that goes out to the field. I want you to work it up and publish it." So it was that I published the first Foreign Service newsletter which was sent to all posts abroad. I used stencils, which I cut on the typewriter, and did it all myself. It was a very crude product, but it went out every month to the field, and it was that much better news than none at all. It was a chore that later developed into the elaborate State Department Bulletin. It just carried on right from that humble beginning.

So Selden Chapin then asked me to go with him to Hungary, where he had been appointed as ambassador, to open our official representation in that country. I was all enthused. We had our tickets in hand and were anticipating going over on a ship, on a Friday. But it was not to be. I came down with hepatitis on that Friday night, and they

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carried me off by ambulance to the Naval Hospital in Bethesda. I was in the hospital there for three months, and, of course, my assignment to Hungary was canceled.

Then after three months, I was finally released from the hospital. I was on that same upper floor from which James Forrestal had jumped out of the window sometime later. You probably remember it. You will recall the previous experience I related to you concerning Forrestal and me at the time of naval demobilization, and the drastic cut in Navy appropriations.

Q: Was that before that, that Forrestal had died?

MCFALL: No, Forrestal was still in office. However, he had just become, a few months prior to my hospital release, the Secretary of Defense, rather than Secretary of the Navy. Legislation had passed merging many defense activities and Forrestal was appointed by President Truman to the newly-created Cabinet post of Secretary of Defense. So right at this point, I was still in the hospital but almost ready to get out. The nurse came in my room and said Secretary Forrestal wanted to talk to me on the telephone. I thought, "What possibly could he want to talk to me about?" So I went to the phone from my hospital room, and he said that he'd just heard about me being in the hospital and that he wanted to know when I was getting out and if I would come down and see him before I reported to the State Department. I told him I would.

A few days later, I went down to the newly-established Defense Department and met with Forrestal. "I'll tell you what I called you for," he said. "When you were in Canada as Acting Naval Attaché, you wrote a series of voluntary reports on the organization of the Canadian armed forces." The Canadians were way ahead of us. They had begun a process of reorganization of their armed forces long before we did. We hadn't started yet. Forrestal had just started to study the problem facing him. Then, to my total surprise, he said, "You wrote a very interesting series of reports which you sent in from Canada. They were all voluntary on your part, and I read every one of them."

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I thought, "So help me, I never dreamed that anybody would ever look at such reports as those." It was just filling time on my part in preparing them. But it proved to me that one just never knows when a gratuitous offering will meet with enthusiastic acceptance. Golly, one never knows where things that one writes may arrive on the desks of the policy makers.

So he said, "What I'd like you to do is this. I've never met the Minister of Defense McNaughton of Canada, but our governments have cooperated very well in the past. I'd like to give you a letter to carry up to Canada as my representative and to talk to McNaughton, and see if you can bring these reports of your up to date." At this time, the reports were about two years old.

So I told him, "I don't know. I'd have to get permission from both my own physician and from the Secretary of State before I could be temporarily loaned to the Defense Department." General George Marshall was Secretary of State at that time.

Forrestal replied, "Yes, I know. But I wanted your permission to ask Secretary Marshall to accommodate me."

I replied, "I don't know. I will first have to have clearance from my doctors because my health is still impaired after my longtime hospitalization."

Q: Recovery takes a long time.

MCFALL: You bet it does.

Q: I never had it, but my wife did.

MCFALL: So you know what it is then.

In any case, I went up to Canada. Then a very interesting exchange took place. I went into McNaughton's office, bearing an ingratiating letter from Forrestal to McNaughton.

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The letter said, in effect, "I'm sending Jack McFall to you as my emissary," and he then explained that I had sent into the Navy Department all these reports about the reorganization of the Canadian armed forces, and that in as much as he, Forrestal, was now just about to start the process of reorganizing our own armed forces, it would be of great assistance to him if I could be afforded access to up-to-date information on how the Canadians were reorganizing their armed services.

Well, I can see McNaughton now. He stood up from his desk, looked directly at me, and said, "You know, I think this is about the most flattering letter that I have ever had in all of my public life. To think that the powerful Secretary of Defense of the United States would send an emissary up to poor little Canada to inquire as to how we might be doing things!" (Laughs)

I just stood there, and I guess, at least for once, I didn't freeze up in terms of saying the proper thing at the proper time. I said to him, "Well, it just occurs to me offhand that one of the keys to a nation's greatness certainly must be found in the willingness on its part to admit that nations and peoples which might not be as populous or as powerful as we are can oftentimes do things just as well, if not better, than we do." He liked that.

He then sat right down at his desk and phoned, successively, the chief of staff of each of the three Canadian armed services, and he told each of them that he wanted everything they had on the subject of the organization of the Canadian armed forces opened up to me completely. So I spent about six weeks in Canada, typed up, myself, an extensive report of several score pages and took it back to Forrestal. He was deeply appreciative, as you can imagine, because it played a role in the action he took later on in fashioning the reorganizing of our own armed services. So that was that.

Now we move on. I went to my first appointment then. Because of this sickness I'd had on my first assignment in the field, I was sent up to Montreal as consul. I was still sick and had to eat very selectively. For a whole year, I ate practically no solid foods, just baby

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food. It was awful. But they sent me there so I could be close to medical attention in the States in case I had a setback.

Then after I'd been in Montreal as consul about two years, orders came from the State Department for my emergency transfer to Greece. So I departed Montreal as quickly as I could and was moved on to Greece within a few days to become First Secretary of Embassy in Athens.

Greece was a very interesting duty tour! This was the beginning of the Truman Plan to revitalize the Greek economy which was in shambles. The guerrillas were within about six miles of Athens. It was a very difficult period. General Van Fleet was representing our military interests there. Our economic aid program was then under the "ECA" - the Economic Cooperation Administration. You remember that organization called ECA. The ECA in Greece had some 2,400 employees located in a building in downtown Athens, and the embassy had a personnel of only about seventy or seventy-five, so it was somewhat a matter of the tail wagging the dog. Of course, the Greeks, in their own inimitable way, were working at the game of playing both ends of the rope against the middle, an art at which they have been historically adept. So they were getting from one side what they had been largely unsuccessful in getting from the other.

Q: Had we already started the Truman Plan?

MCFALL: Yes, it was under way. Yes, it was in the process. That's why ECA had the 2,400 employees.

Q: Sure. Yes, that's right. They were debating this in the Congress when I entered the Service in 1947.

MCFALL: That's right. Our Greek venture was the realization of it. I was head of the economic section of the embassy, and, of course, economics was really the key to success in Greece - the economic situation. It was very, very difficult and challenging.

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You might find interest in a parenthesized comment at this point. I found out that Nuveen—you've doubtless heard of the Nuveen Mutual Funds—this was John Nuveen. He was the head of the ECA in Greece at that time, and Henry Grady was the American Ambassador in Greece. I was told, shortly after I arrived on post there that they hadn't spoken to each other for a period of several days. The relationship between them was severely strained and so you can imagine how the Greeks fed on this situation. Because of this mutual disdain they had one for the other I naturally asked myself, "Just how was I going to be able to accomplish anything in the embassy in the economic field with a situation like this facing me?"

I remember I had told Constance Harvey, who was my deputy in the embassy, that I was going to take a different approach to things. I was going to go down to the Tamian Building, where the ECA was located, and I was going to start on the ground floor and go from office to office, talking to anybody who would talk to me, whether they be officer, cleaner, messenger, or whoever was there. I was just going to introduce myself and say I'd just arrived, I was with the embassy working on economic and commercial matters, and I looked forward to having an opportunity of working with them and getting to know them and hoped that we could work together.

Well, this approach, admittedly unconventional, went on for about three or four days. I'd call up my office in the embassy every couple of hours to see if there had been any phone calls for me. I think the break came on the third day. I called my office and was informed, "Oh, yes, Mr. Nuveen has just called, and he said he understands you're down there in his building, going around introducing yourself to everybody, and he wants you to come to his office right away."

So I went up to his office wondering what kind of a reception I would receive. I had not yet met him. To my relief and surprise, he greeted me most cordially and said, "I understand you're going all through my shop here introducing yourself. What is this all about?"

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I replied, "Well, to me it's just a simplistic act. I thought it would make sense for me to begin to know these people I have been calling on before I really get busy here in Greece. It just seems to me to be quite basic. There's nothing mysterious about it."

"Well," he said, "at least it's a novel approach. I don't know if I've run into anybody who used quite that type of approach." So it was that I got off on a fine footing with Nuveen. He appreciated it.

Then I was successful at a cocktail party in finally getting Grady and Nuveen to shake hands. I approached Grady and asked him, "Please, Mr. Ambassador, come over with me and shake hands with Nuveen." To my surprise and relief, he did. So the ice was broken, but the thaw was not an enduring one.

Then just a few days later, the ambassador called me in my office to come up to his office immediately. As I entered his office, I found him livid, absolutely livid. He was shaking a paper which he held in his hand. He said, "What do you know about this telegram?"

I replied, "What telegram, sir? I don't know what you're talking about."

Grady said, "This telegram from the Secretary of State recalling you to Washington. You've only been here for about three months, and you're just a junior officer. What in the hell is this all about?"

I looked at him and said, "Mr. Ambassador, I have not the remotest idea why I should be recalled. If you have a telegram there that says I'm to be recalled to Washington, I have no idea whatsoever as to why. Maybe it's for me to resign from the Service for some reason. But for whatever reason, I wouldn't have the slightest idea what it might be."

Well, he looked hard at me then and said, "But you do have an idea!"

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That did it. I jumped up from the seat at his desk and said, "All right, Mr. Ambassador. If this is the kind of a Foreign Service that I have to live with, where I'm called a liar by my own ambassador, I don't want any part of it." I left his office, slammed the door in departing, and thought, "Well, this is the end of a short-lived career."

I didn't see the ambassador or hear from him for four or five days, and I studiously avoided anything connected with him. I didn't even want to see him. I was so incensed I even went so far as to compose a letter or resignation which, fortunately, I never sent as the decision to send or not to send it was overtaken by events.

Then about the fourth day after the episode, there was a phone call from the ambassador's office. "He wants you to come right up." So I went up and was met at the door by the ambassador. He was full of smiles. "Please sit down, Jack. Have a chair right here. Sit right here."

Such solicitude provoked a thought on my part. "There's something up now."

Grady then said, "How long is it going to take you to get ready to leave here to go to Washington?"

I said, "To get ready to leave? Am I going to leave?"

"Oh, yes. I want you to go just as soon as you possibly can arrange it."

I said, "Well, for what in the world am I going to Washington?"

He looked at me in a manner that I would define as sheepish and said, "Well, I'm sorry, but I'm under strict instructions not to tell you."

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I said, "Now isn't this a fine kettle of fish, Mr. Ambassador. You charged me with knowledge about why I would be ordered back to Washington when I had absolutely no knowledge thereof. Now you have the knowledge and won't tell me."

He said, "I know, but that's the way life is. I'm under instructions not to tell you anything."

In the meantime, my wife had had to leave Greece at the insistence of our real estate broker and return to Washington to repair an invasion of termites in our Washington, D.C. home. The invasion was a full-scale one. We'd rented our house to Senator Knowland of California at that time, and he had planned to have lunch at our home with President Harry Truman, and Knowland didn't want anybody to know about it, Truman being a Democrat and Knowland a Republican, so he had invited Truman to his home - our home - on Woodland Drive, which we owned at that time. Just as President Truman came to the door, the termites swarmed, and, as it was described to me, the swarm was so huge, one couldn't see anything but termites. It was just one total swarm of termites.

So Knowland then had to take Truman to the Shoreham hotel for the lunch, and the Knowlands had to move out of our house. So it was that my wife, Martha, had to come back from Greece to the dirty work of termite damage repair.

Q: The luncheon wasn't quite as private as originally planned.

MCFALL: No! Martha had to come back from Greece, repair the termite damage and put the house in order, and so she did. Then after she'd accomplished that laborious chore, she was preparing to sign a two-year lease on our house with the military attach# of the Pakistani Embassy for what we expected would be the rest of my tour in Greece - a tour of at least two or three years.

And then a very fortuitous even took place. The administrative officer of our embassy in Athens had come back to Washington on home leave, but somehow or other, in moseying around the State Department, he had apparently found out why I was coming back to

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Washington, but he had been instructed never to breathe it to a soul. In the meantime, he met Martha in Washington. Martha told him, "I'm just about through with the termites. I will have all the repair work done, and I'm arranging to rent our house for two years to the Pakistanis."

He appeared surprised and said, "No, Martha, you must not rent that house. You must not rent that house! I can't tell you why you mustn't rent it, but you must not do it!"

Well, my wife thought he was off his rocker, but she agreed not to sign any rental papers dealing with our house during the ensuing three days.

I arrived in Washington, then, two days later still having no idea why I was being summoned to Washington and my wife thinking I was in Greece. I was instructed to report to Jack Puerifoy, then an under secretary in the State Department. Then, at this point, Puerifoy unfolded the mystery of my summons to Washington. He told me, "Secretary Acheson wants to interview you for a job as Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations."

So I went to lunch first with Under Secretary Jim Webb where an hour was spent quizzing me on a vast variety of subjects. He asked me if I had any skeletons in my closet, and I told him I might have had one or two in the distant past, but if I had had any, none of them had been rattling for years. So there appeared to be no problem there.

Then I had the talk with Secretary Acheson, which I guess was about an hour's chat, and very revealing and very interesting it was to me. What a great man Dean Acheson was! My admiration for him was complete. At near conclusion of our discussion about the job at issue, Acheson said, "Now, I want to tell you about this job. I believe I've considered everything pertinent, and I'm close to a decision that I'd like you to take this position, but before I make any such decision, I want to ask you about your reaction to our discussion."

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I remember telling him that I was just overwhelmed as I had never dreamed of anything like this happening, to be thrown into a position like this, a position requiring confirmation by the United States Senate. I added, "I do have a couple of caveats that I want to ask you about. The first point is, as you may or may not know, over the years, I have had a close relationship with Senator Vandenberg, whom I tremendously admire."

Acheson said, "Oh, yes, I know that. That's fine." You see, it was now one of the few times in the Senate that we had one leader that was generally recognized for his leadership in the field of foreign policy, Democrats and Republicans alike. Vandenberg was it.

I said, "I am such a firm believer in the desirability of our country practicing a bipartisan foreign policy that I feel that if there are any political considerations that might accompany this appointment from your standpoint, I would rather you just return me to the field and you get someone else."

The Secretary said, "I'm very glad to hear you say this. There are not only no political considerations, but I won't allow any political considerations. I want you, if you take this job, to treat everybody the same, to not be in any way directed by political considerations." And he said, "If anything comes to you by way of politics that you believe is out of order, I want you to tell me at once. I will go to the President, and if it isn't corrected then, you won't be here, but I won't be here either."

So I thought, "How could anyone ask for more than that?"

Q: You couldn't get much more support than that.

MCFALL: No, one couldn't indeed.

I then said to Acheson, "There is matter of lesser importance, but I raise it because I think it calls for some discussion." I said, "As you know, I'm only in the middle grades of the Foreign Service, and should I take the job, it would amount to me being catapulted into a

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presidential appointment. I don't know what effect this action would have on my relations with my colleagues in the Foreign Service. I don't want to start in the Service and have people feeling that I'm a favored son or anything of the kind. I would just like to earn my way as I go instead of having something like this interpose itself. It disturbs me. Do you have a reaction to my concern?"

He said, "Oh, yes, I have a reaction. Before giving credence to your view, however, we first have to look at the other side of the coin. To indulge your concern would put a crimp in the ability of the Secretary of State to recommend and the President to appoint whomever they want for the job whether the individuals is in the Foreign Service or out of the Foreign Service. I don't believe there should be any such kind of a limitation on the Secretary's choice."

So I replied, "That's all right. You've explained that."

Then, on the question of the one consideration that I've just mentioned about possible political pressure on me, I did have to go the Secretary twice. On each occasion, I told him that certain people were pressing in on me hard to buy tickets to a political dinner. I don't remember now whether they were Democratic or Republican—likely Democratic in as much as it was a Democratic administration—but in any case, I said, "It's causing a problem for me for sure because if I bought those tickets, how could I deal with the rest of this group that I've been really successful in working with on a bipartisan basis?"

He replied, "Well, I'm glad you did bring this up." So he called me the next morning and said, "I just want you to know I've talked with the President about that matter we discussed, and you won't have any more problems." And I never did. That did it.

Q: You must have established a precedent, because by my day, there was no question about that.

MCFALL: I see.

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Q: No, nobody ever did.

MCFALL: Well, that's all to the good, then.

Q: That would have been considered a bad tactic. As you say, why do you have to buy that?

MCFALL: Oh, of course, I didn't buy any tickets. Once one yielded to such importunities, his future value in the job would, in my mind, be seriously imperiled.

And then I made a final observation to the Secretary. I told Acheson that while we had never met during his time in the State Department, I knew that he had been handling the congressional relations responsibilities for the Department as an Assistant Secretary of State before he became Secretary and that I had heard from several congressmen that he had performed commendably. I told him that I recognized that we were different personalities, and if I did inherit the job, my approach in carrying out the responsibilities of the office would doubtless be different than his, and, hence, I wondered if this consideration might prove bothersome to him.

His response, again, was in keeping with the character of this man whom I learned to admire so much. He said, "You can rest easy on this point. Of course, your approach to dealing with Congress may well vary from what I might have done under similar conditions, but be assured you will 'have your head' to proceed as you think best. And so long as you get the job done, you will not find me looking over your shoulder. But if you make an error of substantial proportion, I will not hesitate to let you know what I consider to be the error of your way. And should another error of like import take place, needless to say, I would be seeking a new Assistant Secretary. But certainly I don't expect any such situation to occur."

I replied that everything he said met with my enthusiastic approval.

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Q: I think maybe if you could hit the high spots. I believe you were just getting started as Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations. I would appreciate it if you would go ahead and give a summary of that position, with any highlights that you remember, and then go on to the other places you served during your career.

MCFALL: The timing on the matter of my appointment as Assistant Secretary was something that caused quite some difficulty. When I entered the State Department in the fall of 1949, everything was falling into place. As I had mentioned, I had this very fine relationship with Senator Vandenberg and also with Senator George of Georgia, another Senate leader highly respected in the Senate. I had lived with the Georges for a period during my early days in Washington. I had looked forward to working closely with both of these leaders. But I had only one interview with Senator Vandenberg which was both a very successful one and a delightful one. Then within a matter of days thereafter, he was taken to the hospital, and within a matter of weeks after that, he was dead. So this whole beautiful dream came crumbling down, in terms of finding a situation that would be so ideally very workable from my standpoint.

Then it was only a matter of a month or so later that the scourge of "McCarthyism" reared its ugly head. I'll never forget the first announcement McCarthy made charging that there were a score or more of card-carrying Communists in the State Department. As I remember, that was the first lead-in to the press headlines of "McCarthyism" that went on from there for some two years, as I recall. You probably remember that McCarthy changed his numbers of alleged card-carrying Communists in the State Department every week or so. He would change the numbers, and by so doing, gain his publicity objective.

Those changes caused a tremendous repercussion in the State Department, and it immediately made my job a much more difficult one. In the beginning phase of the McCarthy charges, my staff and I had good access to discussions with members of Congress concerning our legislative program. Many members of Congress didn't turn their backs on me following the Acheson statement on Hiss, but I found there wasn't the

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same sense of receptivity to my representations that had existed before the advent of that statement.

Then, through the next period of a couple of years, we worked very, very hard with Acheson in furthering our legislative program. He was ever helpful in doing anything, really, that I suggested he do because he said, "I believe that you know more about the legislative requirements than I do, so I'm going to follow you in doing the things you propose."

So we set up a series of arrangements that we hoped would ease the problem for us by way of the Congress becoming more amenable to our representations. For instance, one of the approaches that we thought was very merited involved Prospect House out in Georgetown. The State Department, at that time, had the Prospect House, a beautiful home right on the Potomac River. So we gave a series of cocktail parties out there for members of the Congress. We would invite six at a time, three Democrats and three Republicans. We had the needed wall maps there, and we would have a briefing session. The Secretary or Under Secretary Jim Webb or occasionally I would give a briefing on the current situation. This approach was found to be quite effective. Our congressional guests seemed to appreciate that we were trying our best to get some understanding of what we were trying to accomplish during a most difficult period of political turmoil.

Then Horace Smith, a career Foreign Service officer on my staff, was handling our liaison with the Senate. Horace put a considerable amount of his own money into furthering our effort. We set up a series of luncheon meetings in a hotel right near the Capitol building. We invited three Democrats and three Republicans to each lunch. That project proceeded very well. Either the Secretary or Webb or I would brief the invitees, and all of them seemed to appreciate our doing so. Of course, that program had the value of taking place close to the Capitol building. The members could hurry to answer roll calls, and thus the program didn't interfere with their responsibility to vote on roll calls as such a meeting in a less convenient location would have done.

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An interesting point about this program was the discussion we had in “H” with my staff about whether we should issue an invitation to McCarthy to attend one of these luncheon meetings.

Q: “H” being the designation for the Office of Congressional Relations.

MCFALL: Yes. Right. The point at issue was whether we should invite McCarthy to these luncheon briefings, or should we just ignore him? He was the only member of the Senate I'd never met. I'd met all the rest of them up to that time. So we decided to invite him in furtherance of our even-handed bipartisan effort even though he was anathema to us all. A written invitation was thus mailed to him, spelling out the date and time for one of the luncheons. This brought forth a telephone acceptance in McCarthy's name from a member of his office staff. As I had told everybody on my staff that I didn't believe there was a chance of him accepting the invitation, you can imagine my surprise when his office called and said yes, he would be there.

We all went to this luncheon meeting somewhat in trepidation of what was going to happen as neither I, nor any of my staff, had had any contact with McCarthy up to this point simply because he wouldn't see anyone from the State Department. The invitation called on McCarthy to join the luncheon group at twelve-thirty. A quarter of one o'clock came, then one o'clock. Still no McCarthy. In the meantime, the other five senators, two Republicans and three Democrats, who had been invited to the lunch were impatiently awaiting McCarthy's arrival. So, at this point, I telephoned his office. “Oh,” his staff member said, “no, he won't be there. He had something else come up.” And, on that note, without any apology, the phone was hung up. That gives you an idea of the kind of person he was. No concern for others or even for his colleagues. No apology.

We did a number of things that I think were quite productive. One occurred when it looked like both the Truman Plan and the Marshall Plan programs were in danger of suffering serious reductions. I remember that a visit to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

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produced the surprising intelligence that of the other twelve senators on the committee at that time, eight had not been abroad before. This was just unbelievable! So I issued this blanket invitation to the committee on behalf of the Secretary to go on this fact-finding trip to Europe. It was proposed that we would go to seven or eight countries, one after the other, and we would have discussions with the government and political leaders in each of the countries visited. I set up a plan for meetings that we used in three or four of the countries visited, of having the U.S. Senators placed on one side of the table and the government cabinet of the country visited sitting on the other side of the table, with the prime minister in the center, and interpreters on each side of the table. It turned out to be a very successful device for exchange of views. It was very well received.

So we travelled through the major countries in Europe with Greece the last stop. After our return, it became obvious that the trip had paid real dividends. There wasn't one of that group, Republican or Democrat, that didn't appear to understand the value of what we were trying to do in the field of foreign aid. Of course, with politics always a part of the equation, that did not mean that their votes on legislation we were espousing always received a favorable vote.

Q: Was this the group that was sometimes referred to as the Herter group?

McFALL: No, this was not the Herter group. That venture took place in a prior period. No, it was not the same.

I remember the Senate group told me, "We will go with you if you meet two considerations. One, we get to meet and talk with the Pope, and, two, we meet and talk with Churchill." So I had those two hurdles to get over before the trip could take place. Well, I arranged both visits, and I assure you it was no easy task. Both visits were memorably, but the one with Churchill was totally fascinating! It was wonderfully stimulating! He lived in a little house way out in the outskirts of London, and I took this bevy of senators out to his house. Churchill was in the garden in his famous siren suit. Do you remember his siren suit?

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Q: Yes.

McFALL: He had a very large brandy tumbler in one hand, holding it by the stem, and in the other hand, he held a large rose. Siren suit, oversize brandy tumbler, and rose - it was a sight to be ever fixed in one's memory! He was in his garden in the back of the house. It had a high wall around it. The butler had thrown open the two French doors which opened onto the garden, and there stood Churchill in the middle of the afternoon—three o'clock—and he was obviously somewhat “in his cups.” He came weaving across the garden lawn approaching us, and he said, “Come on in now. Come on in, and we'll have a little talk and some refreshments.” So we went into the small dining room.

These senators told me later that they were thinking, “Oh, my God, what a mess this meeting is going to be!”

This concern was fortified when the butler arrived shortly with ten of the same mammoth brandy tumblers filled with Scotch and soda. Unfortunately, the tray held one less drink than there were participants. The butler then suffered a humiliating rebuke from his boss for this dereliction of duty with Churchill asking, “Where's mine?” The butler then corrected his failure in short order.

Well, you know, that old revered warrior, Churchill, within a matter of ten minutes, after we had seated ourselves around the small dining table, had sobered up, and the Churchill that you'd heard of, that you'd read about, emerged. He simply captivated those senators! He had every one of them in the palm of his hand.

Many questions were asked and answered. I recall he turned to me at the end of the discussion at the table and said, “Now, you haven't asked any questions. You bring all these people here, and you've been quiet all the time.”

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I replied, "It's my business to be quiet here. These are the people that wanted to hear your comments because they're the ones that are going to make the important decisions, not I."

Again he said, "Then you don't have any questions?"

My reply was, "I have only one question, but I hesitated to enter into this conversation."

He said, "What is it?"

I told him, "Well, I was wondering what, in your view, the government of the United States is now doing that it ought to stop doing, and what we're not doing that we ought to start to do."

He gave me a quizzical look. "That's a hell of a question to ask at this time in the late afternoon, but I'm going to answer it. Yes, I'm going to answer it." Well, did he ever answer it! He took off from there for a good fifteen minutes and just went on and on and on, discussing this all embracing question. The senators were captivated!

Then at the end of our meeting, Churchill pulled Senator Brian McMahon and me over into the corner of the room and said, "There's one thing that I want to caution both of you gentlemen about. It's this. This insidious Communist development, to my mind, is going to become one of the most difficult problems with which the world has ever attempted to cope. For democracy to win will involve a continuing cooperation effort among the democracies to frustrate its expansion. Cooperation among the democracies is imperative. But, of even greater importance, is that your country and mine remain steadfast and dedicated in opposing communism in any guise or form. If we fail this responsibility, I fear for the world." His observations were emotional and unequivocal.

I remember Senator Brian McMahon turning to me afterwards and saying, "I never realized until now the intensity of his feelings about communism."

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Q: This was after the Fulton, Missouri, speech.

MCFALL: Yes, as I recall, it was after that speech. Churchill had been defeated for parliament. He was no longer in office.

Q: He was at the time of Westminster, I think.

MCFALL: I would want to check dates on this point, but I think he was.

As I say, as it turned out, we apparently were quite successful during that period in getting our legislation, volume-wise, passed by the Congress. We missed some. I remember we lost the trade fight which called for setting up an international trade body. That was defeated. But by and large, we really succeeded in getting a great deal of legislation passed, and we worked intensively at it all the time.

Of course, we had some real experts. First, I had Ben Brown as my Deputy Assistant Secretary. He was tops and later became an ambassador. Ben largely handled the Senate side, in laudable fashion, after Horace Smith left. Allan Mareland did an excellent job in exercising his responsibility to cover the House of Representatives. Phil Claxton bore a good measure of our work load and uniformly performed loyally and well. Then there was Florence Kirlin, an outstanding promoter of her assigned responsibilities with long experience in the field of promoting legislative causes. We had, I think, a very effective team.

There were, of course, difficulties from time to time. I remember one thing. A congressman from Indiana called me up and said, "There's a move afoot up here to charge you with lobbying."

"You know me." I replied, "What am I supposed to do? Isn't that a part of my job?"

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He said, "Some individuals up here don't recognize that to be a part of your job. They think you should stay down there at the State Department and quit bothering to lobby Congress."

Well, outside of a few little developments like that which didn't really mean anything one way or the other, we continued on our path of trying to convince the Congress of the wisdom of the legislative course we were recommending.

Then we had, of course, a lot of political happenings that caused difficulties. For example, the MacArthur problem was something that really had to be dealt with, in terms of the effect it had on all the legislation we were trying to get through the Congress. It was a toughie. I was asked by my staff how to handle that, and I simply said I regarded the President and MacArthur feud as something between them that I devoutly hoped would not spread to the other highly important legislative matters facing us. And, therefore, when I went in to talk with members of Congress and others about legislation, if they'd bring this up, I'd simply say, "Please, this has nothing to do with what I want to talk to you about." And that's about really all you could do. You just tried to talk "around" the General MacArthur dismissal. I thought President Truman was absolutely right in taking the action he did, but the feelings in Congress were running so high on both sides of the issue that we did not want to hazard our legislative program by excessively angering congressional supporters of MacArthur many of whom were also supporters of our legislative program.

Q: Because people were lining up on either one side or the other.

MCFALL: That's right, as you know. Opinions on that issue were very deep seated and emotional. Very intense.

Q: You've gotten pretty much all the Marshall Plan.

MCFALL: Yes.

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Q: In those days, you worried about the appropriations?

MCFALL: That's another thing. Yes, I'm glad you brought that up because shortly after I took over the job, I went to Dean Acheson and told him, "You know, I think it's now reached a point where I should have responsibility for congressional appropriations taken away from my jurisdiction because there's just too much of a possibility of a conflict of interests, as viewed from the congressional standpoint. Because I had twenty years on the Hill with the Appropriations Committee, and it doesn't look good for me to be out here arguing for the State Department appropriations when I had that background." Just like all the charges that we're hearing now about the President and his cronies.

He agreed with me. He said, "I think you're absolutely right." So that's when he pulled Deputy Under Secretary Carl Humelsine in to take over the appropriations responsibility coverage. And he left me all the other arrangements and dealings with Congress including all the legislation, but not the appropriations.

The result of that move by Acheson was that most of the bothersome problems that came out of that change were on the appropriations side, when McCarthy and some of his followers relentlessly pursued Humelsine on the personnel situation. Charges of employment of Communists in the State Department, appeared for a while, to play second fiddle to charges of homosexuals in the Department.

Q: That was very smart. That shows how astute you were.

MCFALL: I don't think there is a chance that I'd be here if I hadn't shed that responsibility to cover the activities of my old committee. (Laughs)

Q: But that's an interesting piece of history for me because I always wondered how it came about.

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McFALL: Acheson had no problem with it. He said, "I think you're absolutely right." Of course, there again, it was a great advantage that he had had the job of being responsible for State-Congress relations at an earlier time. He grasped the lurking danger right away.

Q: Yes, of course.

McFALL: He saw the significance of my request.

There are endless other subjects that make up the working days—and oftentimes the nights—of the nearly three years I spent with Secretary Acheson on this job and which I don't want to burden this account unduly. I think it is meet that I refer to a few of the activities that took place as we moved about during my tour.

Because of the ever increasing congressional travel, I, with some assistance from my staff, compiled and wrote a Handbook on Congressional Travel which dealt with most problems that might arise in cases when State Department officers were to accompany congressional trips on foreign travel. As I had had considerable experience in this area when I worked for the Congress, I could bring those prior experiences to bear in publishing the handbook.

When there is a proper legislative mission for such trips, and when the chairman and members of the committee have been carefully selected, much good can redound from such a foreign trip. The Herter group that gave impetus to the Marshall Plan is a good example. But there were other groups as well. I refer to those committee members who traveled around at the expense of the taxpayers many of whom should have been grounded before they took off for foreign parts. I made a couple of sincere but futile efforts to get Congress to impose congressional leadership controls over this burgeoning development, but I might as well have tried to dam up the ocean. And I would assume that the proliferation of subcommittees which I referred to earlier and which took place since

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my time in the congressional pasture will certainly continue to bring about ever-mounting costs of this form of bleeding the taxpayer.

I set up a program for Foreign Service officers to ascertain the name of their congressman and to call on him or her just as a courtesy call. When this plan started operating, warnings were given to me from some quarters that such a program could lead to political problems, but this never happened during my time. To the contrary, many officers were invited to lunch with their congressman and appeared to be pleased with the idea of the meeting. Several congressmen and senators also lauded the development. The plan was discontinued after my departure for reasons unknown to me.

I accompanied Acheson on all of his major appearances before House and Senate committees. He had uniformly done his preparatory homework before appearing. Occasionally, he would tend to be brisk with committee members in answers to their questions, but he was always amenable to my criticism if I thought it was called for. His riposte might be something of the nature of, "Anyone who asks a silly question like that doesn't deserve to be in Congress." But, of course, that was not exactly the way to win friends and influence people, true as his remarks may have been about the question asked.

Then, of course, there were ceremonial occasions from time to time such as the time I was one of those escorting the Queen of England and the Duke through the Capitol building and when I received Winston Churchill at the Capitol and introduced him to Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn whom he had never met before.

Speaking again of this Churchill visit in a lighter vein, I might relate a personal experience of the McFall family bearing on a reception—dinner—dance given by Secretary and Mrs. Acheson at Anderson house. You may be sure that invitations to this social event were sought after with what might be called "fanatical fervor." It so happened that when told we were to be invited, my wife was in a state of uncontrolled ecstasy for one particular reason.

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Shortly after we had married some twenty-five years prior to me joining the Foreign Service, one night, at a fireside conversation in our home, I had propounded a question to my wife. "If you had a free choice of selecting any one person in the world whom you would prefer to meet over all other individuals, whom would it be?"

She replied unhesitatingly, "Winston Churchill." Whereupon she explained that she had hero-worshipped him since she was a small girl, but she, recognizing the chance of ever meeting him was just nonexistent. I fully agreed.

Now at this moment, her dream of a lifetime was about to come to pass! So she purchased a new ball gown and prepared for her lifetime thrill. But she had not confided in me her "grand design!" We had proceeded down the receiving line which consisted only of Acheson, Mrs. Acheson, and Churchill. Acheson turned to Churchill and said, "This is Mrs. McFall and Assistant Secretary of State McFall."

These words became the signal for Mrs. McFall to root her feet in the floor immediately facing Churchill at which point she started making her case to him explaining how she had revered him since she was a small girl, etc., etc., etc. My wife's adamant stand in front of Churchill produced no little fallout. Tugging on her dress bustle by the Chief of Protocol who was trying his best to dislodge her and get the line moving again as she slapped his hand behind her back, vainly trying to dislodge his hand from the dress bustle; the invitees becoming audibly impatient with the lack of movement of the receiving line; Secretary Acheson looking at me with an expression of obvious disapproval, the repercussions of which I thought I would be hearing about in the morrow. And then it happened. After concluding her eulogizing of Churchill, she said to him, "I have concluded that if this opportunity of meeting you ever occurred, I was going to ask the privilege of kissing you."

There wasn't even a pause as Churchill replied, "And what, my dear, is restraining you?" So saying, a touching embrace ensued amidst the oohs and ahs of those not so patiently biding their time in the receiving line to meet the honored guest.

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After the dinner, Mrs. McFall and I were dancing on the crowded dance floor when I felt a tap on my shoulder by one of Churchill's aides, whom I had previously met, coupled with a query, in an unmistakable English accent, "Pardon, but is that Mrs. McFall with whom you are dancing?"

"Yes, it is," I replied.

"Would you be kind enough to release to my custody for not more than five minutes?" the aide asked.

"Is it for my wife only?" I inquired.

"Oh, yes, just your wife," he replied.

So at this point, I repaired to the wall of the ballroom awaiting my wife's return, having no idea where she was going and what was afoot but feeling assured nonetheless that she was in safe hands.

Minutes later, she was returned by the aide with elation written all over her face. It seems that the aide had escorted her out to the porte-cochere where Churchill was standing beside his limo. Churchill said to her, "My dear, I have been a politician for a better part of my life, and a cardinal principle that must govern the actions of every successful politician throughout his life is that one good turn always deserves another." So saying, he kissed her goodbye and motored off. She was on cloud nine for days!

Q: What was the last thing that happened in Congressional Relations before you left, the last big thing you remember before you left? You were always so busy in that job, it's hard to say.

MCFALL: I think one of the most interesting developments was when the Secretary issued the statement about Alger Hiss. You can imagine what that statement did up on the Hill.

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Some members of Congress wouldn't even open their office to me. One heard comments such as, "That damn fool that you're working for," they'd say, "how could he make a statement like that when the issue is before the court?" So I really had some rugged sledding after that for a not inconsiderable period of time.

When it came time for me to go to Finland, Acheson called me up to have lunch in his office with him. At the conclusion of the lunch, he asked me, "Now you're leaving, have you any thoughts that you want to leave with me?"

I said, "Mr. Secretary, there's one in particular that I do. I don't know whether you have any realization of what you did to me and my staff in terms of the Hiss statement that you made some while back." I said, "It was ruinous. It was devastating. I just wondered why you didn't consult someone about the effect it would have on our legislative program before you made such a statement."

He said, "No, I know very well. I didn't consult anybody. It just came out. I can tell you this, that it was not one of the smartest things that I ever did in my life." So he recognized that it did have repercussions in certain phases of our operations.

Q: Let's lead into Finland. How did you decide to leave and get out of this mess you were in?

MCFALL: I went into see Acheson and told him I finally had reached the point where I was totally exhausted from this job, and that I hoped he would move me to the field, and I didn't care where it was or on what job. I said I felt the time had come after nearly three years in the job for me to move on. It had been a rugged three years. I was nearly broke. I'd spent a heap of my own money in entertaining congressmen at my home and at other places.

He said, "I can understand full well. We're going to look into that matter." That's the way he put it.

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Well, the next thing I knew, Carl Humelsine came in to see me and said, "We're going to send you to the field. You have three choices. You can go to Thailand, Sri Lanka, or Finland." He said, "You think it over. Go and talk it over with your wife, and think it over, which post you want to take." I thought that was very considerate to be given a choice like that.

Of course, I picked Finland. That was one of the smartest things I ever did in my life because it turned out to be a marvelous experience in a wonderful post among delightful people. The Finns are so refreshing to be among once you get to know them. They're somewhat slow to warm up to you. They first want to look you over head to toe. They are very discerning. And once they make a friendship decision, it is an unqualified commitment. There are wonderful friendships that one builds with them.

One of the happy events of my life took place on my sixtieth birthday some ten years after I had departed from Finland and had been retired for several years. I was awakened at two a.m. with a call from Western Union informing me they had a cable from Finland which at my request they read to me. It was a congratulatory cable from an old Finnish friend. But before the next twenty-four hours had passed, Western Union was kept busy calling me and reading like messages, all from Finland, including a long one from the Finnish President Kekkonen. I assure you it was a series of heartwarming developments for me. As I recall, I received sixteen cablegrams—all from Finland. I later learned that the largest Finnish newspaper had published that it was my sixtieth birthday. The fact that I had been no part of the Finnish scene for nearly ten years appeared not to concern the message senders.

It was a three-year period, right at the turning point in Finnish history, when Finland just about went down the drain to the Russians as a result of the economic pressures that the Soviets put on them. At the end of the war, the Finns had to pay what was roughly the equivalent of \$500 million in reparations to the Russians. The Russians, of course, saw the chance here to exercise pressure, so they told the Finns, "No, we don't want your wood

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products. Of course not. We have wood products of our own in Russia. What we want is for you to build a heavy metal industry. We want you to build ships. We want you to build locomotives and heavy equipment.”

Well, the Finns just looked askance. Practically all they made at the time were pots and pans; that was the only metal industry they had. They couldn't convince the Soviets, however.

“No, you're going to have to establish a heavy metal industry.” Of course, the design of the Russians was manifested; they knew damn well if they succeeded in having the Finns establish this new industry, thereafter the Finns would never be able to sell the products of such heavy industries to western countries as the cost of the products would be too great. So they had them over the barrel, so to speak. That's what went on.

As the matter unfolded over the years, the Finns made a series of trade treaties with the Russians to exchange with the Soviets the metal products that the Finns had been forced to make. This trade went on for an extended period. As I recall, there was a series of three successive reparation agreements which were instrumental in paying off this reparations bill. So it was all paid off, and when the last payment was due, the Finns made the last payment right on time, just as they did with their debt to the United States growing out of World War I. They're the only nation, as you know, that has paid, on time, right through the years. So they've honored their debt obligation all the way through. No other nation debtor can say the same.

It was a delight dealing with the Finns because you knew once you had their word, that was it. They would never backtrack on any commitment. Once they'd said yes, they meant yes, and that was it. As you probably remember, Kekkonen was the president of Finland for, I think, some twenty-two years, having served the longest of any nation's chief executive at the time he died. I had so many experiences in that country, but I don't know how many of them you'd be interesting in having recounted.

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Q: What were the issues between the United States and Finland at that time? Were there any particular problems?

MCFALL: Remember, my days in Finland corresponded with continuing cold war activities world-wide. We were adjacent to a seven-hundred mile Finnish-Russian border. Finnish territory had been bifurcated by the Soviets taking over a stretch of Finnish territory named Porkkala a few miles east of Helsinki on the sea. It was heavily fortified by the Soviets with large guns to protect the sea avenue into Leningrad.

Humiliation of the Finns even in greater degree occurred when the Soviets, as a part of the armistice ending the Finnish-Soviet hostilities, demanded and secured the Karelia area from Finland which was adjacent to Soviet Russia and which was Finland's most productive and prized land. When the armistice terms were announced, only some seventy-two hours were given the 475,000 Finns living in Karelia to either leave Karelia and their land and march to the new Finnish border, or to remain on their property in Karelia under the new Communist government. Best evidence is that all but a hundred or so of the 475,000 residents just walked out of their farms, driving their livestock ahead of them and crossing over into the new Finland minus Karelia. The story of how the Finns met this refugee crisis and solved it with little world attention being given to it is still another testimonial to Finnish spirit of "can do" or "sisu."

Our main mission at our embassy in Helsinki was to try to ensure the continued economic viability of Finland by encouraging its resistance to continuing Soviet economic pressures. We were called upon, on more than one occasion, to try and stop Finnish tankers with their destination Communist China from delivering any petroleum to China.

We were successful by using a variety of approaches some of which were last-minute efforts, so to speak, just before the tanker was to enter its Chinese port destination. Methods employed, as far as I know, are still classified.

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Yes, I had a very active and, I believe, effective tour in Finland.

One point might be of some interest. I received a letter of which I still have a copy. It was from Richard Nixon. During my period as Assistant Secretary of State as the McCarthy fiasco began to develop, one of the few McCarthy Republicans that I could depend upon to discuss anything with me—one who had not pulled back in terms of talking with me and being frank with me was, oddly enough, Richard Nixon. Out of the blue, he called me up at my State Department office one day and said, “Jack, I want you to know that I make a sharp distinction between our nation's foreign responsibilities and our domestic responsibilities. I know what your difficulty is now. You have a real problem. I've talked among my Republican colleagues, and I know very well that you're having problems along the line in dealing with the McCarthy group.” But he said, “I want you to know that my office is open to you at any time, and I want you to come in any time you want, and I will talk with you on whatever legislation you're proposing. I'll be perfectly frank with you and tell you whether I will support legislation you may be promoting, or if I won't support you, or whether I might support you if certain changes are made. I want you to know that my office is always open to you for that purpose.”

Well, you know, as a result of his offer, I used it several times. I went in to him because he was a splendid “sounding board,” you know. He was just exactly that. He was as frank as he said he would be. He'd say, “No, I wouldn't support you on that proposal under any circumstances,” or “You'll have my nod on that one.” Whatever his views were, he would express them usually unequivocally.

Before I went over to Finland, he had asked me, “I wish you'd write me a letter when you get over there to tell me whether you think our policy toward Finland is going to change or not.” So I sat down after I'd been there a couple of months and saw the picture unfolding, and I wrote him a long letter. I told him that I had reason to believe that our policy was going to continue just as it was. I sounded out my Finnish sources, and I had no reason to believe that we were going to make any particular changes in any direction in our Finnish

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policy, and the main thing now was just to see that the Finns held steadfast and didn't yield any more than absolutely essential to the Soviet economic pressures. That's the policy we were pursuing, and I hoped and expected it to be continued.

Then the way the Finns ultimately pulled out of this economic dilemma, pulled out of these doldrums of economic despair was remarkable. These shipyards and locomotive factories and such heavy industry development had been established from scratch by sheer dint of incessant hard labor. Imagine building all these ships in the outdoors—building those ships at ten, twenty, or thirty degrees below zero with the difficulty of welding—doing all the construction on these big ships in those sub-zero temperatures. But you know, it wasn't a matter of more than a few years before the Finns became competitive for sales to the west of the products of those metal industries that were established from scratch. So now the most outstanding icebreakers in the world are built in Finland. Absolutely the best! They are all over the world. So now they have a beautifully balanced economy. As a matter of fact, it could be argued that it all turned out to be a blessing in disguise as the Finns ultimately wound up with a new heavy industry that turned out profitably for them.

Q: They are great people. The company I worked for did some business with them before the war, in wood pulp, the paper business. We bought a lot of Finnish pulp. They were great people to do business with.

MCFALL: Oh, always. Such honesty and integrity all across the board!

Then I developed my travels in Finland. That was one thing I did that I believe was probably unique. I made up my mind I was going to get into every community in Finland of more than 5,000 people before I left the post providing that I remained in Finland for at least three years. So I was successful in this endeavor to the point of visiting forty of the forty-four cities and towns of more than 5,000 people. The onset of my heart problems caused me to fall ten percent short of the goal I had set. The experiences that flowed from

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those visits were just a series of absolute joys and delights! But they did take a toll on the body and the digestive tract.

Here was a typical example—typical particularly of the smaller communities visited. Of course, every place I went, the first thing you did was to call on the mayor, see the fire station, see their churches, maybe a school and such other buildings of which they might be proud. Then the city fathers would have a huge dinner or lunch for me—always.

I remember one visit particularly because it was truly touching. It was at a place called Pietasaari up on the Baltic coast. I had made those sightseeing rounds that I mentioned to you, and now we were at luncheon. Three or four glasses of wine at each place setting, of course, and they'd gone down in the bowels of the civic building and pulled out this wine that was eighty-five or ninety years old that they'd been keeping for a special occasion. So the mayor—who was the toastmaster—in his fractured English (little wonder that his English was fractured as “up country Finns” get little chance to use any English) was introducing me, and he said, “We have a very important visitor. He is the ambassador from the United States. I have been looking in our town records, and I find that we have not had a foreign diplomat in our little community since Prince Henry came over from Sweden in 1218.” (Laughs)

But that gives you an example of the kind of stimulating development that these community visits produced. I must say I did receive recognition for this program of visits. President Eisenhower, in the letter following my medical retirement, wrote me that he wanted to commend me for what he thought was a splendid job I had done in getting into the country and meeting the people.

Then I started another program. Fortunately, I had an excellent Foreign Service officer on my embassy staff who spoke Finnish. So we set up a series of meetings in the northern areas of Finland, including Lapland particularly, among the lumberjacks. We set up a series of meetings largely in the remote areas to attract the Finnish Communist groups

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who had considerable support in the lumberjack areas. Then we'd have a question and answer period. Those meetings were, I thought, extremely effective. I believe I was successful in my talks to these groups. I think my background played a part there, my background and knowledge of our government and how it operated because many of the questions dealt with our government. "Tell us about your Social Security." "Tell us about your unemployment compensation." "Tell us about the health services you provide." And I was able to give a good account of all of them because I'd been constantly exposed to information on such matters. I'd been through the legislative and the appropriations processes for many years before that. So those were very effective meetings. I think, really, the whole tour was highly successful.

In addition to this program of meeting with the logging groups, I embarked on two other enterprises, both of which involved considerable travels. The first effort was directed at Finnish industry. I visited several manufacturing plants that produced for both domestic and foreign consumption. Some of them were located in Helsinki, but many were spotted throughout Finland. These visits were helpful, for sure, in both educating me on how Finland was "keeping up with the times" as well as providing me an ever-enlarging group of helpful contacts, some of which were to prove valuable as my time in Finland moved on.

Then there was one more program that I decided to undertake - a tour of several Finnish farms, with the details of the trip efficiently arranged by the Finnish National Farm Federation. I was able to discuss Finnish farm problems with the farmers of each of the many farmhouses visited. And what hospitality was bestowed on Mrs. McFall and me at each farm! My recollection is that we encountered a groaning table of food at each of our stops—food that the farmer's wife had slaved over in preparation for hours, if not for days. And, of course, we had to be enthusiastic at each farm in extolling the endless varieties of food offered us. It was a matter of us eating six times a day in order not to offend any of our hosts!

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So here, again, are two more methods of operation by which a Chief of Mission can, in my opinion, add measurably to the success of his or her mission in the country of assignment.

Another truly heartwarming event occurred when I had been scheduled to visit a rural school far from Helsinki. It had been snowing for a better part of the day, and there was some six inches of snow on the ground. To get to the school from the town where we had stopped overnight would provide some real travel burdens. I phoned the school telling the teacher of the travel difficulty, but she said, "Oh, you simply must come, the children have been awaiting your coming with great expectancy, and we have a surprise for you that we have all worked very hard on." She said, "Rent a sled, and you will make it." And so we did. And what a delight it was covering those eight miles as the snow enveloped us en route—boyhood days relived.

As we arrived at the school, a dear little Finnish girl presented me flowers, and just as I was proceeding to the hand-hewn desk and benches, the surprise suddenly arrived. The teacher went to the rickety piano, and then a full chorus of song emerged from those young Finnish voices. And what was the song? It was the "Star Spangled Banner" sung in English! They had spent days learning the words, and they took no shortcuts in their mastering effort.

I have related only two of the forty tours of this type, but at least these two should serve to show the kind rewards and delights experienced at the various community visits.

And so it was that by working so hard, my heart began to go downhill. In other oral history interviews, I think I did explain about the time I was ordered by my Finnish doctor to take a vacation because of my health deterioration. My heart doctor examined me and said, "I will not treat you here after another month because you may not be here after a month." Well, that put the fear of God in me.

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So finally one of my Finnish friends came up with a proposition. He told me, "I have just the place for you. I have a comfortable lodge on an island about twenty-five miles from the Russian border way up in Lapland. We will go to Lapland, and you can have ten days up there. I will take my son and wife, and you bring your wife. You'll have total relaxation."

This proposal fitted in with my doctor's edict that if I didn't get some rest soon, "I will not treat you anymore. You won't be around." So we went up to Lapland, and I'll never forget that trip. In getting there, we took almost every kind of transportation known to man—airplane, train, and jeep—finally winding up in a Lapp canoe. We then paddled for a considerable distance before finally coming to this little island Shangri-la, where I was to have the delight of uninterrupted relaxation and recuperation.

The first day we devoted to shooting kapakalia. Wonderful game bird shooting it was. Then the next day, the second day, we went fishing and caught salmon, salmon, salmon.

Now we come to the third day. I was just beginning to feel like a human being. We three men, the host, his son, and myself, were luxuriating in the sauna when all of a sudden, up there in remote Lapland where there was no other habitation within thirty miles in any direction, we heard this "putt, putt, putt" sound. My host put up his hand to silence our conversation and exclaimed, "That's a motorboat!" So with that, we all jumped up and ran out of the sauna. We were stark naked, of course, as we ran out onto the little dock that my host had also hand built there, and sure enough, coming right toward us on the horizon was a small Lapp canoe, a little Lapp boat hollowed out of one large log. It pulled right up to the side of the dock. Three diminutive Lapps—of course, all Lapps are diminutive—were in the canoe. We could sense that they were kind of weaving in the boat when they pulled into the dock facing we three men standing on the dock, stark naked, in mid-September. One of the three was clutching a piece of paper.

The three of them piled out of the boat onto the dock and lined up opposite the three of us. The middle Lapp was clutching the small piece of paper, and each of the other two

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were trying to hold him up, one on each side of him. The holder of the paper was weaving back and forth. Finally, when the one Lapp let go of the center Lapp in order to hand the paper to my host, bang—he fell flat on his face. So here we were, the three of us standing and facing the three of them, with the three us stark naked, and the three of them clothed in their colorful Lapland outfits. It was indeed a memorable picture! There was an empty bottle of booze reposing in the boat.

So my host leaned down and picked up the paper that the prone Lapp was still clutching, tore open the envelope, and passed the paper to me. He said, “This is a telegram in English. It's for you.” The telegram said, “You are summoned to the United Nations, which opens on the twenty-third of September. We would like you to report two or three days ahead of the convening of the U.S. General Assembly in order for you to be given briefings in the State Department, covering 106 items on the agenda.” It said, “However, we would like you to become ambassador before you depart Finland. Ask president of Finland if he will accept your credentials as ambassador to Finland before you leave.” (At the time, our mission in Helsinki was a legation headed by a minister, but agreements had been reached with the Finnish government to raise the mission to embassy status following similar action to be taken by the Soviets.) The telegram also said I would be senior advisor to the American delegation to the United Nations on European matters.

Well, there I was up there in remote Finland with only two days of my “recuperation” having passed and now to be headed for the pressures of a new assignment. We again traveled all day by several types of transportation arranged by our host by means of instructions sent by the returning Lapp couriers to the “last outposts” Lapp telegraph office and finally got back to the embassy about ten o'clock at night after some sixteen hours of hectic travel. The first thing I asked on arrival was, “Where are my credentials?”

“Credentials? Credentials? What credentials?” Yes, there were no credentials, there were no credentials that day! So I wired the State Department immediately: “How am I going to become ambassador without any credentials?”

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The Department wired back at three o'clock in the morning, as I recall, and informed me, "Sorry. There has been a terrible flap. President Eisenhower hasn't even signed your credentials as yet. However, we're contacting the President, who is in a Denver hospital, and he has agreed to sign your credentials right away. Query. Will president of Finland accept telegraphic credentials?"

Well, certainly being no authority on credentials, I hadn't the slightest idea what kind of a reaction I would receive from the president of Finland, Paasikivi, to such a credentials proposal. Kekkonen was, at this time, the prime minister. I called him, and I said, "I have a question here. First, will the president of Finland (who was at that time eighty-two years old and living 150 miles away from Helsinki in a summer retreat) receive my telegraphic credentials so I could get to this United Nations meeting now scheduled for a scant few days in the future?"

He said, "Now, you know the president is quite old, and this is asking a lot for him to come in 150 miles to Helsinki. What is this about?"

"Well," I replied, "my government has asked me to inquire if President Paasikivi is willing to accept telegraphic credentials covering my designation as American Ambassador to Finland."

Well, the prime minister then called me back and said he had talked with the president again, and the president had told him that he would come in to Helsinki and accept my credentials, but only on condition that I would give my word that I was coming back to Finland. Well, in the hustle and bustle, I had forgotten to tell Kekkonen that the message did say I would be returning to Finland, so I told the foreign minister that, "I can assure the president of Finland on that point."

So I received the "telegraphic credentials," and I'll never forget it. A series of those pink sheets, you know, those telegraphic pink sheets that numbered about ten pages. I put

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them in a large fancy white envelope with the seal of the United States implanted all alluringly. The staff and I, in full dress, were ready to proceed to the presidential palace. The word had been put out in the newspapers, in the headlines, "The American Minister is to Present Credentials as Ambassador." Well, it was an astonishing development to observe because the embassy was less than a mile from the palace, and the streets had thousands of people line up just to observe my staff and me to make that short drive to the palace! It was thrilling! It was truly a thrilling occasion for all of our embassy, and the Finns appeared to participate fully in the glee!

The Russians, you see, were the first to upgrade their mission, so they had attained their embassy status some short time previously. We were the second country to make the change.

When our contingent reached the presidential palace, we entered the courtyard where the Finnish army band gave a fine rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner" after which next I entered the palace in the company of Foreign Minister Kekkonen, and we were greeted by the Finnish president. What a dear old man Paasikivi was! I was still clutching the credentials, those infamous telegraphic credentials that I'm inclined to believe set a precedent in such matters. I said, "Mr. President, I thank you for receiving me. I have my credentials, and I want to present them to you."

The president took the envelope out of my hand, he looked at me and said, "My prime minister tells me there is something in here that is just not like it should be."

I said, "Mr. President, I'm inclined to think that's a fair statement of fact."

He said, "Then I think we don't open it." He took the envelope and put it on the side table and never did open it while I was there.

I then told the president, "If any Finn might have had any question about whether you deserved to be president of Finland, they should observe this performance."

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Q: *Wonderful!*

Continuation of interview: June 3, 1988

Q: *Ambassador McFall, when we left off nearly a month ago now, we were just getting you out of Finland, at least for the first time. You had been called back to Washington, I believe, to go to the United Nations. Would you like to pick up from there?*

McFALL: I think we were at the point where I'd just finished presenting my credentials at the palace. From the presidential palace I was rushed back to our embassy so I could take off my formal clothes and go at once to the airport. They held the plane's departure for an hour for me so I could get to the airport, driving sixty miles an hour. I recall musing on the aircraft after departure not "king for a day" but "ambassador for an hour." What a hectic stage of events! The flight to New York at least broke the series of hectic movements for a short spell, it was uneventful. From the time of arrival in New York, it was a continuing series of problems of one type or another that I just didn't quite surmount, as you will see as I speak along.

I arrived at our UN offices on Park Avenue and reported in. The young lady there that was to be my secretary showed me my desk and said, "I think the first thing you should do is to go in and see Ambassador Lodge (who was then our ambassador to the UN) and pay your respects."

I was thinking of all of the times when I was in my job in Washington as Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, and people asked me, "Who was the most difficult individual in Congress with whom you had to deal? Who was your bete noire?" I think they all expected me to say Senator McCarthy, but that would have been inaccurate. The point about it was that McCarthy was the only senator I had never met—he wouldn't let me in his office to meet him. So that took care of itself. But the senator giving me the greatest difficulty had been Lodge.

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I said to my secretary, "Yes, I know. I haven't been looking forward to that either. I was engaged in crossing swords with him a good portion of the time he was in the Senate."

So she said, "But you have to do it."

So I went in to his office to see him, and he was very gracious. We chatted for a couple of minutes, and I said to him, "You know, I'm just really upset. I've been moving at breakneck speed to get back here from Finland. I was right in the midst of negotiations with the Finnish government on a couple of very important matters. Why they've pulled me out of Finland when I was right in the middle of important negotiations to come back here, I'll never understand. I don't know who in the devil engineered it."

He looked at me and smilingly said, "No mystery, I did." I admit I had some difficulty in believing that because, as I tell you, he'd been the like of a problem child to me most of the time he was in the Senate.

The next very interesting development, I thought, was that just after I'd seen Lodge, I walked out of my office again and started to go to the elevator just as the elevator arrived. My little secretary came running breathlessly out of the office and exclaimed, "Oh, I'm so glad I caught you! Secretary Dulles has just telephoned. He's in the Waldorf Towers, and he wants you to come over right away."

I replied, "Secretary Dulles? Why would Secretary Dulles want to see me?"

She answered, "Yours is not to reason why, but to get to the Waldorf Towers posthaste. He's going to address the United Nations at the opening speech tomorrow, and he wants to talk to you."

I was impatient to get over to see the United Nations building. I'd never seen it up to this point. So I hailed a cab and proceeded to the Waldorf Towers and up to one of the top

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floors, whichever it was, where Dulles' living quarters and his temporary office was located. It was at this point that the ensuing comedy of errors began.

There was a policeman at the door of his suite. I showed my pass and walked in to a little anteroom where there were a couple of settees and four doors—the door you came in, the door over here, a door over there, and a double door over there. There wasn't a soul around, and all the doors were closed. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know which door to rap on. I knew Dulles lived in this suite, and I didn't want to walk in on his bedroom. So I just sat and sat and nothing happened. I suppose I was in there for ten minutes.

All of a sudden, the door from which I had entered originally, opened again, and a debonair individual walked in. From television, I knew who it was; it was Casey, who was the foreign minister of Australia. He had been referred to as “the poor man's Anthony Eden.” We introduced ourselves, just the two of us there in the waiting room. Casey said, “I have an appointment with the Secretary.” When I then identified myself as ambassador to Finland, I noticed that he had a very quizzical look on his face as if to ask, “What in the devil is he doing here?”

So we chatted in the anteroom there for about five minutes, and presently one of the doors—the French double door—suddenly opened, and there stood Secretary Dulles. After greeting and shaking hands with us, he said, “Please come in to the salon, gentlemen.” He then said to Casey, “Have this chair over there.” And to me, “Have this chair over here.” And with that, Dulles deposited himself into a very comfortable overstuffed chair and pulled up a foot stool. He said, speaking to Foreign Minister Casey now, “When we were last talking here, you ended your discourse telling me about Australia's concerns about certain aspects of SEATO.”

On this statement by Dulles, my growing concern about just why I was a part of this meeting became immediate and worrisome. Just what was I, the American Ambassador to Finland, doing in a discussion with the foreign minister of Australia and the American

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Secretary of State concerning the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization—a subject about which I had had no briefing and about which I had no breadth of knowledge?

As Dulles talked, he seemed to be in a reflective mood. He started in by going back to 1905, the Geneva discussions of 1905, and from there he went on talking, leaning back, philosophizing and enjoying his own comments. Then he shifted into the whole question of the travel of the Secretary of State, and the burden that it imposes on him in his ability to carry on his responsibilities. He developed this theme in both length and depth. Suddenly, the thought flashed across my mind that the only conceivable reason I would have been in that room was to monitor the conversation. I certainly couldn't contribute anything to the discussion!

So, for right or wrong, I made the decision that such was my mission. I was trying to think, “My God, can I remember the details of their discussions connected with the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization?” I just barely knew its name. In any case, I thought, “I'm going to try to remember what is said, if it's at all possible.”

The meeting broke up, I guess, about a half an hour afterwards, and both Casey and I went out the door back into the anteroom. Just as I was going out the door leading to the hallway, one of the other doors that led to his staff section opened, and Dulles' secretary grabbed my arm and said, “Oh, my God, we owe you an abject apology! You see, you are here at the United Nations as the senior advisor to the American delegation on European and British Commonwealth matters. We just assumed that when Casey wanted to talk to Secretary Dulles, he was going to talk to him about a matter on the United Nations agenda. We just took that for granted. But now we realize that matters on the United Nations agenda were not discussed at all which leaves the staff both contrite and apologetic. I gather that not a single item pertaining to the United Nations matter had been discussed!”

I then said, “You now have a prime example of the dangers of improper assumptions.”

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Dulles' secretary replied, "Well, I do hope you remember what was said so you can go write a memcon on it."

Q: You must have got some instructions, I hope, on what the senior advisor was to do.

MCFALL: Oh, yes, we had plenty of overnight instructions. I told you about the marathon briefings given me over the previous weekend in the State Department, and the position our government would take on each of the 106 agenda items. But the matter under discussion between Casey and Dulles had never been mentioned in my State Department briefings, and, furthermore, it is a bit far-fetched, as I see it, to expect an ambassador just called back from Finland to be informed on the myriad details of a treaty arrangement, including, among a series of technical subjects, troop numbers and dispositions, share of costs, etc., in an area of the world about as remote from Finnish problems as one could find. No. None of the instructions I had been given dealt even remotely with the situation that confronted me, so I just had to perform as best I could under my own limitation of lack of background knowledge of the subject matter under discussion.

On this note, I left the Dulles quarters and returned to my office, very weary but faced with a formidable task, namely, the writing of the memcon covering the Dulles-Casey meeting. I spent seven nonstop hours at the task, having had no dinner. I fell into bed well after midnight, in a state of exhaustion.

As a parenthesized remark, it is of interest that this memcon evoked considerable interest as well as surprise across the top echelon of the State Department. According to Douglas MacArthur, the councilor of the State Department, the Dulles conversation I reported on his travels; on demands on his time; on his responsibilities and on his official frustrations had not been theretofore discussed by him in the detailed way he did on that occasion. MacArthur lauded this memcon capture of Dulles' attitudes on the variety of subject matter that he addressed on this occasion. Apparently, the memcon was given wide top-level circulation in the Department.

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I arrived at my office on the following morning—the morning the UN General Assembly was to convene—and after making a few corrections prior to typing on the many-paged memcon, I started out of the office to the elevator en route to the UN building which I had never seen. But no - it was not yet to be, for again, just as had happened the day before, Dulles' office phoned and asked me to return to his Waldorf suite immediately, which I did.

This time, I found Sir Leslie Monroe, the New Zealand Foreign Minister, following me by a few minutes into Dulles' reception anteroom. But this time, my mission was made clear. It seems that Monroe had phoned Dulles, irate that Casey had “stolen a march on him” in presenting the Australian viewpoint on some of the contentious items involving SEATO, and Monroe wanted to present his side of the differences at once. So, once again, I sat in on a discussion about SEATO.

Of course, my second presence is explained in the fact that the Dulles secretariat now had me made available as a highly qualified expert on all matters involving SEATO—highly qualified, if you will, after having been exposed to technical SEATO subject matter for the first time ever on the previous day! So now my instruction from the secretariat was to prepare a memcon covering that meeting.

As I recall, at this time Sir Leslie Monroe was either the president of the UN General Assembly or was about to become such. This was the day that the United Nations was to open. Monroe said, “I'm going to walk over to the UN building for the official opening of the General Assembly. Do you want to walk over with me?”

I said, “Well, I haven't even been able to see the building as yet.”

He said, “Come on. We'll walk over together.” The weather was hot and very humid as the two of us walked the several blocks to the United Nations building. I had reached a point about a hundred yards from the UN building entrance when I began to feel very weak and suddenly saw spots in front of my eyes. Then I began to feel so weak, I thought I was

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going to faint. I grabbed onto Monroe. He was able, then, by supporting me, to get me into the building, and he took me right to Ambassador Lodge's office. I laid down on the settee there, Lodge not having yet arrived. I had this problem with my heart, as I had mentioned earlier in this interview. So I was very disturbed about it, but I was also conscious that I had to find a way to write the memorandum before I forgot what had been discussed in the meeting, or I had become further physically incapacitated.

So I got up after about an hour of lying on his couch there, and I dictated to his secretary the memorandum of conversation, which turned out to be much shorter and easier to prepare than the one with Casey of the previous day. It took about an hour. She said, "Now that you've finished this chore, I think it is important that we get a doctor for you and find out what your health situation is."

So she called a doctor, who didn't take very long in arriving. After a hurried checkup, he said to me, "We're going to send you to Staten Island to the Public Health Service Hospital right now for an examination." As it turned out, that was the beginning of the end of my career. I was six weeks in the hospital in Staten Island. It was quite a severe heart attack.

After the six weeks in the hospital, my wife took me to Florida for further recuperation. Of course, I was determined, because I had promised Finnish President Paasikivi, that I would go back to Finland. I felt an obligation to carry out my commitment to him. The doctors in the State Department didn't want me to take on any more service in Finland. They didn't want me to return to Finland. As you know, the winter climate in Finland doesn't lend itself to heart therapy. But I was determined.

I just said, "I must go back to Finland." And the doctors finally relented. I was back in Finland for about five months, going downhill all the time. Finally, I threw in the sponge. I wrote Under Secretary Henderson and told him that I had come to the realization that the doctors were right, and it was time for me to pull out.

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But let me say that the State Department was very good to me. They asked me, at this point, to take six months' leave of absence during which period they'd give me every legal kind of advanced annual leave and sick leave possible, which they did. So Mrs. McFall and I took six months for recuperation which consisted largely of slow freighter travel to many areas of the world. No rush, no pressure. Of course, I had to come back at the end of the six months and face the medical board again for a clearance before I could be given a new assignment, if any.

Had I mentioned that Secretary Dulles lived next door to our Washington, D.C. home?

Q: Yes, you mentioned that.

MCFALL: However, I don't believe that I had mentioned about Mrs. McFall talking to Mrs. Dulles. It was interesting because when I came back from this six months' hoped-for health recuperation, I think it was on a Friday that my medical examination was scheduled. The Medical Corps decision was unanimous. All five doctors had said, "You're out. Medical retirement."

But some few days before my medical examination took place, Mrs. Dulles had phoned Mrs. McFall and invited us to come next door for a cocktail. Both of us were mystified. We couldn't imagine why in the world Secretary Dulles would be wanting us to come over for a cocktail. So we went next door. There were just two other invitees—Australian Ambassador to the United States and Mrs. Spender. So here I was with Australian company again. In any case, we enjoyed a very pleasant cocktail hour, and I remember saying to my wife after returning to our home, "I'm at an absolute loss to understand why in the name of heavens he ever invited us to his home."

I never found out the answer to my puzzlement until about a year later. In the meantime, Dulles had died, and, at this point, Mrs. Dulles was talking to Mrs. McFall across the

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backyard fence, and she said, "I wanted to ask you. Do you remember that time we invited you over for cocktails, you and your husband, and we had the Spenders?"

Mrs. McFall replied, "Remember? How could we ever forget it? We never understood why in the world we were there or why you would possibly want us to be there."

She said, "Well, my husband had told me at the time that he was going to recommend you to the President as ambassador to Australia if you successfully passed your medical exam. Of course, that 'if' had been resolved negatively sometime previously."

Q: I take it you were not at the UN long enough to get a feel for the operation.

MCFALL: Hardly. I was there for just that one day; that was it. During the course of my hospitalization, Ambassador Lodge came over to see me at Staten Island, and he couldn't have been nicer all the way along. He was very considerate and wanted to do anything he could do to be of help. So it was a major disappointment to me when I realized I was out—out at just fifty years of age! I had tried to compose my thoughts by thinking, "Come on—you have a new life in front of you now, and it's up to you to make it a fruitful one and not let your current health adversity take over your will to move into new fields where you can be productive in spite of your health limitations." Nonetheless, it gave me a little psychological wrench for a couple of months. Then everything began to take on a different perspective, and I became fully reconciled to my situation and was not at all unhappy therewith.

Q: You didn't lose your interest in foreign affairs by being out.

MCFALL: No, I did not lose my interest in foreign affairs, as I think you know. I have been a member of WIFO (Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs) for some thirty years and have participated in its programs whenever my limited time of domicile in Washington would permit.

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For many years after retirement, I devoted myself, at my own expense, to furthering and promoting the so-called Sister City Program. By working through the mayors and leading citizens of many communities in the U.S. and abroad, I succeeded in instituting several Sister City relationships, many of which have continued to this day. Here again, warnings from the heart problems caused me to pull out of this activity.

I have also kept up my interest in DACOR and served on its committees and, twice, on the Board of Governors. Although my contribution was small indeed, alongside of your own, considerations of health have acted as severely limiting factors on my movements and actions.

My longtime personal doctor has enjoined me from involving myself in any activity that creates pressure or stress and dictates that I should absent myself from any cold weather. I have an angina pectoris problem which calls for frequent use of nitroglycerine pills to allay heart pains. Experience has been a good teacher since my retirement, however, so I have a pretty firm grasp now on what I can do and what to avoid.

So while I have kept up my interests, generally, in foreign affairs, I have done little in the way of keeping up my contacts on Capitol Hill. There are indeed few and far between in as much as my separation from congressional matters and concerns has endured for some forty years.

*Q: That's very hard with the changing Congress. I know you have published the book *Tales of the Foreign Service*. Do you want to tell us about that and anything else that you did? I think that would be interesting because the retired careers of Foreign Service officers are often very interesting, too.*

MCFALL: Yes. I literally dreamed up the idea. I wanted to set up a worldwide prize-winning arrangement confined to the American Foreign Services whereby Foreign Service personnel could submit manuscripts for a book of *Tales of the Foreign Service*. The

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Foreign Service Journal cooperated fully with me, and I announced through the Journal a series of prizes that aggregated \$4,000 that would be paid by me, and I also paid all promotional and administrative costs associated with the project. The contest was announced in the Foreign Service Journal, and they promoted the contest enthusiastically and ran editorials about it. It all worked out very well.

I constituted myself as Chairman of the Board of Prize Awards and picked both senior and junior officers to serve on the Board of Judges to determine the prize-winning manuscripts—this to ensure impartiality. My recollection is that we received something in the nature of 150 manuscripts sent in from all over the world for prize judging. We wound up with something like twenty prize winners, scaling down from \$1,000 for the first prize to \$100 for the honorable mention group.

As book cover recommendations, I had secured comments from Henry Kissinger, Loy Henderson, Robert Murphy, and Mrs. Dean Acheson, Secretary Acheson having died before the book was published. The accounts were glowing.

The net result of the effort was that I received several clippings from book reviews all over the country. We published, as I recall, some 2,000 hardcover copies for the original issue. When all those copies had been sold and the publisher did not wish to publish more copies, the Foreign Service Journal, on its own, decided to contract for a paperback edition. I've forgotten some of the details, but I believe they had printed some 1,000 or 2,000 copies. I recently learned they're still selling them. At least they were selling them down at the Foreign Service Day this year.

But the idea for publication, as I put in the preface to the book, was to encourage young people to give some thought to making the Foreign Service a career by giving ideas of what kind of experiences would be in store for them if they did successfully commit in making Foreign Service a life's career. All profits from the sale of copies of the book and

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from magazine articles we divided equally between the educational programs of AFSA and of DACOR.

So I think it was, all in all, a successful enterprise. A number of people have wanted me to do a second book with the same general purpose in mind.

Q: A later generation, perhaps.

MCFALL: That's right. Exactly. That was the thought. But I decided I had had enough. Let some other Foreign Service officer now learn the pitfalls of publishing a book. Again, recruitment for the Foreign Service is not now in the doldrums as it was when I launched the book. I like to hope that my book might have played some small part in that improvement.

Q: Did you do any speech-making or serve on any boards connected with foreign affairs or committees?

MCFALL: I served on the special committee that investigated the My Lai incident in Vietnam. They had a special board appointed to investigate a charge of possible involvement of Foreign Service officers in the incident. I had previously rejected a request of the Director General of the Foreign Service that I take on the chairmanship of the committee as I was bowing to the admonition of Dr. DeVault that I steer clear of any and all work that might involve pressure points such as deadlines. And there was no little pressure we ran into as Congress and the press both became interested in our investigation, and I learned before our task was completed just how far I dared to go before the heart would start to rebel.

We had a Foreign Service officer that some thought might be involved in the massacre there. It was a very interesting six weeks' investigation. We exculpated the Foreign Service officer.

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Of course, I've been on selection boards.

You see, when I retired, Dr. DeVault, the Chairman of my Medical Retirement Board and a warm, personal friend, told me, "I want you to be sure that in your retirement you do not take on activities that involve pressure points. That's what will carry you out. If you'll just coast along, take good care of your health, and take life easy, you can probably live to a good ripe old age. But if you start getting involved in a type of work that produces pressure on you, you may be in for a sad surprise."

So I really took his admonition to heart while I've had several offers of various kinds of employment, I've steered clear of accepting most of them because the stress possibilities were ever-present.

Q: It sounds as though his advice was very good, indeed.

MCFALL: I think it was, because of the fact that I'm still around here at age eighty-four, and he's been so very helpful in handling so many of my medical problems that have ensued since my retirement is absolutely marvelous. It was only eight months ago, for example, that I was awakened at three a.m. with intense heart pains. I phoned Dr. DeVault, and he came immediately over to our apartment, ordered an ambulance, and rode in it with me to the hospital. It turned out to be an attack of pleurisy with no residual problems, but it had all the earmarks of a heart attack.

Of course, Dr. DeVault lives right here in the Westchester Apartments as I do. As you probably know, he has published a book on his splendid accomplishment in setting up our health services throughout the world. I have no doubt whatever that his decision on my retirement spared me departing these parts sometime back.

Q: Yes. I still see him around. You are, on the whole, fairly satisfied with the way the Foreign Service treated you?

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MCFALL: Oh, very much so. More than that, I am grateful to the Foreign Service for the humanitarian treatment I received throughout my entire service.

Q: The problems were undoubtedly caused by your service to the country, in large degree.

MCFALL: Yes. The fact that my medical records in the State Department indicate my heart development was service-connected speak to that point. Loy Henderson wrote me a long letter expressing disappointment in the fact that I wasn't able, at that time, to continue but offering me that arrangement of six months off the payroll which I took. However, I failed to become fit, medically, to return to the Foreign Service. So as far as the State Department was concerned, they just couldn't have been more considerate. Everybody was so helpful and sympathetic in terms of trying to get me re-established in the Service.

I think, too, perhaps one of the things that brought on my heart attack when I returned to the States—and this is something I hadn't mentioned before—was what happened to me immediately on my return from Finland and this hectic and hurried trip. The State Department wanted me to come in to the Department on a Sunday morning just after my arrival because, they reminded me, “There are 106 items on the agenda of the General Assembly of the United Nations in its meeting on Tuesday. And you have to be briefed on all these 106 items.” Well, you can imagine. They started briefing me at eight o'clock Sunday morning, and I was still going well into that night, considering one item after another, drinking coffee to sustain spirits and ward off complete exhaustion. So I'm sure that that episode would not be put in the category of happy events.

Q: You had already had trouble, too.

MCFALL: Yes, I had. I had been under the continuing care of a heart specialist in Finland and was proceeding under his strict instructions. I think I did mention that he told me, “I'm just not going to continue to treat you. You've got to make some adjustment and get out of the Foreign Service.”

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Q: Considering your experience and perhaps what you know about conditions today, would you join the Foreign Service again? Would you advise young people going in to join it? Or do you have some reservations now?

MCFALL: I don't think I would have any reservations about it. I think the Service has changed. One thing, of course, that has changed is the wife situation. As you know, the problem is not only one of trying to find the post where two of them can serve and can be together, but also the problems that are brought on as a result of women having been rejuvenated in the way of the work place. Some of them now, I understand, will let their husbands go abroad while they keep their job in the United States. So these developments can bring on some real problems in their wake, and I understand that.

Q: I assume you found, as I did, that the Foreign Service really was a family job. That is, both members of the family participate in the career, and the government got free service from the wife.

MCFALL: That's exactly right. That's just what it was.

Q: What do you think about the idea that keeps being noised around of paying wives to be wives in the Foreign Service? In other words, to conduct the social life.

MCFALL: I guess I'm too old-fogey-like. I never could go along with that. Neither would my wife. She just throws up her hands and says, "Of all the cockeyed, crazy things I've heard of!" She doesn't share any enthusiasm for that at all. I feel the same way.

Q: With your experience, in which you've seen a number of different kinds of ambassadors and a number of problems, do you have any thoughts on the relative value of career ambassadors versus political ambassadors, and what rules should be applied? Anything on that subject?

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MCFALL: Yes, I do. I've had the same views, and they haven't altered in the slightest form from the time I started working on State Department appropriations matters when I was on the staff of the Appropriations Committee and started handling State Department matters fifty years ago. I have believed very definitely that we should not have an absolute fixed percentage of career officers versus non-career, but rather that the career group should be the predominant group numerically. I have believed that they should constitute not less than about seventy-five percent of the ambassadorial appointments made by the President.

Q: You mean seventy-five percent of the ambassadors should be career?

MCFALL: Of the ambassadors, the top jobs. Yes. That's correct. That seventy-five percent of ambassadorial appointments should be in the career category. I believe that possibly something in the order of twenty to twenty-five percent should be definitely left open for the exercise of presidential discretion in cases where a particular individual is ideally suited for appointment to a particular place. You see, you must preserve those spots for people like the Dave Bruces and the Ellsworth Bunkers, for example. We should do it because such appointments serve to bring in fresh thought, capability, and valued experience to the Service itself. But, in practice, we've moved away from this concept that I'm talking about. The career officer percentage has slipped markedly. I don't think we ever attained a percentage as high as seventy-five percent. At one time, a few years ago, the ambassadorial appointments of career officers consisted of around seventy percent of the total. But that period was short-lived, and now we have been fast moving in the opposite direction.

Q: The percentage favoring career officers moved up especially at the end of an administration, very often. (Laughs)

MCFALL: Right.

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Q: That did happen occasionally. There is one advantage that I always saw in having a certain number of political ambassadors, and that is that foreign policy, in general, and the Foreign Service, in particular, was the beneficiary of a pretty good set of attorneys around the country from people who had served in tours as ambassadors and then went back to prominent positions in civilian life. This was not an unuseful adjunct to operating the Foreign Service.

MCFALL: Yes, I could certainly go along with that.

Q: Especially since we notoriously do not have the same constituency for foreign affairs that the Post Office Department or military have, or the Agriculture Department.

MCFALL: Yes. But, of course, we deplore the appointment of unqualified individuals as ambassadors whatever the country to which they are assigned. Many of these ambassadors to the banana republics, as you know, have been political appointees certainly not noted for any diplomatic capabilities. In fact, the department of some of them was little short of scandalous. The answer to this questions, as I see it, is that we must find a way to bring the force of public opinion on the President to elevate the caliber of individuals who are appointed in this political category of seventy-five percent. It is a most important matter that we don't continue to consider these ambassadorial appointments as political plums that go to individuals who do not have the background or ability to justify such an appointment.

Q: To get back to your great expertise, of which you have many, but in the particular field of congressional relations, do you have any thoughts in the modern day, in today's world, about the conduct of congressional relations, about how to manage the desire—in fact, insistence—of Congress to participate in the conduct of foreign affairs, which I think has probably increased since you and even I were involved in this business?

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MCFALL: Yes, I have some ideas, but I am concerned with possibly being opinionated too much on the situation of twenty-odd years ago. I'm not so sure what portion of my experience of those years in the past I could bring forward in a way that would make sense today.

The big change that's taken place in the Congress came about, as you are aware, after Congress set about making rules and changes which severely limited the power of the Speaker of the House and greatly expanded the system of subcommittees and their exercise of power.

Q: The leadership, in general.

MCFALL: The leadership, in general. Exactly. And permitting the creation of this series of subcommittees, each one with its own little power base. The result is you have all these subcommittees, each one with its own staff, and each one jealous of power, and, hence, if only by sheer dint of numbers, causing greater problems in working harmoniously with the executive. It was a great mistake, in my opinion, to allow this accumulation of small bases of power.

As you know, because of the multiplicity of these subcommittees and the people that work in them, there not only isn't room to house them all in the Capitol, but they have so filled available office spaces in the multiple House office buildings in a way as to make inevitable the inefficiency that flows from crowding. They're just spread all over Capitol Hill.

And the subcommittees are jealous of the other ones. If one subcommittee gets additional employees, it creates pressure to give the same to other subcommittees, and so it goes.

The other day I was inquiring about how many people they now have on the staff of the Appropriations Committee of the House. During the twenty years that I was there, we had, as I recall, a staff of twelve, including the messenger. And now I'm told that at last count, while they weren't really sure of the exact number, they thought it was about 135. (Laughs)

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And I'm sure that such spiraling personnel is not peculiar to the Appropriations Committee either; the whole congressional personnel situation has mushroomed out of hand, in my opinion, as well as out of my taxpaying pocket.

Q: It's tremendous.

MCFALL: Of course, and this makes it an extremely difficult operation to form and cover a congressional relationship with all of these proliferating committees and subcommittees.

Q: One thing that's impressed me very much in the greatly increased complexity of the problem of consultation, particularly in crisis situations. In my day, and I'm sure it was the same in yours, maybe less, you could make about twenty-five calls if you had an emergency, and you covered the waterfront. If these people were satisfied, they'd spread the word around Congress. Now you must have to call at least 100 people, I would think, and maybe more.

MCFALL: I'm sure that must follow as the day the night, the building up of these little subcommittee repositories of power. The present situation is so different in Congress now that I am confident the approaches we used in the past would not work today, the ways that the staff and I used in the past. They were very effective at the time I was there, and I really believe that we did a fine job there under the most difficult circumstances we were confronted with during that era of irresponsible McCarthyism.

But, as I think I mentioned to you, Bill Macomber, who was your boss originally, telephoned me when I was sitting on a selection board after retirement. I had not met him previously, but he invited me to lunch and to his swearing-in ceremony as Assistant Secretary of State after which he told me he wanted to talk about the Congressional Relations job. He said he wanted to know just how in the world we'd been able to get all the legislation we did on the books at the very worst time, historically, in the relationship between the Congress and the State Department.

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Well, I told him I didn't know for sure, except to say that we just worked like hell at it. We were a small, well-organized, and dedicated group. My background on Capitol Hill and the fact that I knew so many people as friends and associates in the Congress probably also played a part in the successful results we attained.

Q: And you knew the psychology of the Congress. That's quite different from the psychology of the executive branch.

MCFALL: I think you're absolutely right, yes.

Q: You mentioned Senator McCarthy. He was perhaps only the most notorious example of something that does come up, it seems to me, in every generation or every few years in Congress. There are always one or two maverick types.

MCFALL: (Laughs) Yes, there are indeed! Congress has produced its share of them.

Q: Who are power builders and almost impossible to manage, demanding privileges, demanding quid pro quo for any cooperation and this sort of thing and being fairly unreasonable about it. There is one today. Perhaps it is not discreet to mention Senator Helms, but he is of that type.

MCFALL: Boy, he sure is. He wasn't in Congress during my period in Congressional Relations. And I have an idea that I am none the worse off for not having another Senator Lodge-type with which to contend.

Q: There's a lot of them in between. Do you have any particular thoughts on what to do about those people, what kind of tactics are the most effective in dealing with a person of that type? You must have had to do it on many occasions.

MCFALL: Yes, of course, I did. But I don't know quite how you can make any generalization on it.

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Q: Because it's individual.

MCFALL: What kind of an approach do you use to this particular individual? Does boning up on his congressional record provide any helpful clues? Is there any kind of a service we can offer through the State Department that might make him or her more amenable to our cause? There are no pat answers on this point. Each one presents an individual problem calling for individual appraisal and handling.

Q: Do you have any final thoughts or wind-up thoughts that you think should be mentioned about the conduct of foreign affairs by the Foreign Service or by the administration, how policy is made, anything of that sort?

MCFALL: One of the administration's legislation proposals that I do so agree with—and, of course, this comes from my background in the Congress more than in the State Department—was the President's recommendation that legislative authorization for the President to make a line-item veto is so extremely important. How many states already have it? Is it forty-two or forty-three? I think one of the reasons that the idea hasn't taken fire in terms of public endorsement is that the people don't understand what is meant by a line-item veto.

Now, President Reagan did focus on it in his State of the Union speech, but nothing, legislatively, appears to be moving on the issue. This is an extremely important thing in my view. It would be so simple, too. There could be congressional rules adopted that would guarantee to a member of Congress whose item had been eliminated from an omnibus bill, for example, that the item could be brought to the floor and voted on within a certain period of time following any veto.

But I am fearful that this is wishful thinking. Our legislators already are so wedded to the advantage they now enjoy of being able to “bury” their pet legislative items in omnibus bills (many of such items that would never receive the approval of Congress if they were

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to be considered by Congress as standing on their own as individual items), and by the use of such a “burying” tactic to force a veto of the entire bill by the President as the only means available to him to show his disapproval of any one particular item, large or small, contained in the omnibus bill. A device is thus set up which permits the immersion of the so-called “pork barrel” and “special interest” items into the omnibus bill with the sponsoring congressman knowing that the President will not veto the bill because the vast preponderance of items therein are highly desirable for presidential approval in the public interest.

A large number of the states already provide for a “line-item” type of veto by the governor of the state, and you may be sure it has been a money saver to those states just as it would so become to the Federal government if such a similar type of line-item legislation were to be approved by Congress.

Here again, education of the public is the key to attaining success on this issue. I dare say there are not a large number of our citizens who understand just what the term “line-item veto” means. Its value in limiting expenditure of government funds is potent, but the public needs to become greater informed how it operates in accomplishing such expenditure limitations.

Then we ought to have some kind of an arrangement, maybe we couldn't do it exactly as the British do it, but we could establish career assistant secretaries in each of the permanent departments of government just as we now have an Inspector General in each department. So when you have a change of administration, you would still have at least one high-level person remaining in there that has the experience and background knowledge particularly needed after each change in administration who can carry on until the new appointee breaks in and begins to learn his job. I feel very strongly on this score, namely, that we've been very remiss in not having some kind of an arrangement like that. The details would have to be worked out, but the principle, I think, is very valid.

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Q: It's very hard, I guess, particularly when you have a change of political parties, to get agreement to carry over somebody that was serving a previous administration.

MCFALL: Those carried over would, of course, be civil servants.

Q: That's right, but the mere fact that they worked for and represented the party can be a very serious thing. It might be well, at least for a limited time, say six months or a year.

MCFALL: Yes, exactly, until the transition is over. That's the main idea.

Q: I want to thank you very much, indeed.

MCFALL: I don't know that I've added a great deal of insight to anything, but one may possibly find a few worthy thoughts in our discussion.

Q: You have added a great deal. It's very hard, I think, to fix concrete ideas, but you add up enough of these little suggestions. I think you have made two or three very valuable ones right at the end. Again, I think we can close this with satisfaction that we have preserved for posterity a very useful experience that you have contributed. Thank you.

MCFALL: Thank you.

I do have a comment as a postscript to our interview. It concerns me that I have probably been too prolix in some of my recitals in this interview, particularly those dealing with the latter portion of my career starting with my assignment to Finland and ending at the United Nations. But there was a design on my part to try to show how a Foreign Service officer being subjected to a series of inordinate demands on his physical self can bring about his own self-destruction. Certainly no small part of the failed end result can be found (1) in my own failure to exercise a more reasonable degree of prudence in the number of projects personally undertaken by myself, and (2) in failing as well to properly pace myself in working on the projects that I did undertake.

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Admittedly, where, how, and when one is able to work out ideal arrangements for the safeguard of one's health in our Foreign Service with the ever-increasing demands made on the time and energies of our officers cannot be set forth in any neat formula. Varying post conditions such as weather, medical availabilities, exercise opportunities, etc., all play a part in determining what "pace" any particular officer should adopt. But I do believe that further education of our Foreign Service officers in the benefits attained by paying continuing heed to considerations of their health could only make for a happier and more effective organization.

My Finnish heart specialist gave me plenty of warnings of impending problems. My problem was I wasn't listening! When immediately after retirement, I did start listening, the results have been gratifying!

End of interview